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NORA RAY,

THE CHILD-MEDIUM.

A SPIRITUALISTIC STORY.

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PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR.  
1878.

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# NORA RAY,

## THE CHILD-MEDIUM.

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### CHAPTER I.

MR. AND MRS. RAY IN SEARCH OF HOLIDAY GIFTS  
—THE ONE THING NEEDFUL FOR THEIR HAPPINESS—THE CHILD IN THE BASKET, AND THE BLESSING IT BROUGHT.

HE stars shone brightly, twinkling in a peculiarly merry way, almost smiling on the passers by in the streets of the quaint old town of R——, nestled close down to old ocean, where the roar of the waves made solemn music when the storm was abroad in winter, yet so soothing in summer, when the wavelets beat on its beaches, or kissed the rocks which bound the coast for miles around.

It was Christmas Eve; the stores were decked with evergreen wreaths, and holiday goods hung temptingly in the windows. The streets were filled with people and the shop-keepers were doing a thriving business as anxious mammas and papas, lovers and friends, were abroad on this night of all in the year's calendar, earnestly seeking for some mementos to place in the stockings so daintily hung up, or to fasten to Christmas trees in families where the occasion was celebrated more elaborately.

"What shall we get for our little waif?" said a pleasant-faced man to his wife, as she hung lovingly on his arm, and the two leisurely walked along, gazing intently into the shop windows.

He was, evidently, a seaman—one of the better sort, a Captain, no doubt, for both he and his wife were dressed in garments of fine texture, and with evident good taste.

"I hardly know," was the reply. She turned and looked up into his face as he spoke, and as



their eyes met, there was such an exchange of affectionate regard that one learned by intuition that the couple were happily married, and blessed in loving and being loved by each other. This makes a paradise of earth, giving one the courage to bear any fate.

"Let us buy her a doll with movable eyes, real hair, and one that will cry!" exclaimed the man, as he drew his wife's arm more closely to his breast.

"Would that please her, do you think?" asked the wife.

"Oh, yes, for she takes such good care of the one you made for her, and one of these with paint and curls will please her more than anything else. Her little heart will beat so happily when she gets it! A doll let it be, Martha. Come in here and let us choose one. I guess I will buy a little carriage, also, for her to ride dolly in."

They made their selections, and after purchasing some other articles, proceeded homewards, filled with happiness and contentment.

While they are walking along so cheerily, it will be a convenient opportunity to relate some incidents in the lives of this worthy couple.

Edgar Ray and Martha Holden had loved each other from childhood. He it was who drew her to and from school on his sled, let her coast with him, and lingered about her in his leisure hours. They scarcely knew where love came from—as since their first acquaintance it had always been a welcome guest in their hearts. They grew up together, and, he at twenty-one and she at eighteen, were married. They then lived up the river, where he was master of a packet which ran up and down to the city. A more advantageous offer, and they came to R——, where he became master and part owner of the fastest vessel in the fleet.

They had been married twelve years, and there was only one cause of unhappiness in their life's cup—they were childless! Exceedingly well matched, affectionate, spiritually minded and prosperous,

their hearts yearned for a child of their own, and this great boon had been denied them. The presence of a little one would have crowned their wedded life with joy and filled their cup of happiness to the very brim. Nature had denied to Martha Ray that best gift—the indescribable happiness belonging to motherhood. She had wept and prayed, asking the good God to bless her and send a little prattler to gladden their home. But as the years rolled on, a sadness oftentimes came over her, as the fact became clearly manifest that she would never become a mother. This was the skeleton in the closet, and the worthy couple in their mutual confidence with each other did not seek to deny it.

Hours and hours would Mrs. Ray sit in her rocking-chair, envying other women who had little faces nestled to their bosoms; who could comb the soft ringlets and sing loving songs to little darlings, kiss them good-night, watch over them in sickness, love them, and take such comfort with the dear ones. Here was a wealth of mother's love wasting

away, having no object on which to pour out the rich stream which flowed so lavishly in her great motherly heart.

Edgar Ray also was disappointed. He never saw a child on the street without wishing it was his; and many a time, as he passed by the schools at recess, would he bestow sweetmeats upon the little girls, toward whom his heart yearned so lovingly.

Oftentimes they thought of taking a child from an asylum and rearing it as their own. But the plan was never effected, and time rolled on, increasing their mutual desire, without supplying the much needed little one.

Six years ago this very Christmas Eve the couple were out looking into the shop windows, as they were to-night. The sight of the happy parents purchasing toys for their children, awakened ardent longings, and they sighed at the thought that no child blessed them with its presence. They returned home and retired. At midnight Mrs. Ray

was awakened by a sound closely resembling the wail of an infant. She had been in a deep sleep, and at first thought it was a dream, as her dreams were apt to be of children. She lay wondering if she had been deceived, when she heard again the faint cry. This time she was fully assured, for she heard the cries plainly, and arousing her husband, they got up and proceeded to open the porch door. As they did so, they heard the cry once more, very distinctly: Looking about the porch, they found in one corner a basket covered over with a thick shawl. They took it into the sitting-room, and unwrapping several folds of blankets, found therein a beautiful little girl dressed in clothing which gave evidence that she came of parents who moved in the upper walks of life, as none but loving hearts could have clothed the little one with such exquisite taste and care. In the basket was a complete outfit of baby clothes, made of rich material and of most beautiful workmanship. There was a note, also, which read as follows:

"This child's mother is an inmate of an insane asylum. I, her nurse, place her in your hands. May God deal with you, as you deal with this darling. She is yours. May your hearts open to give her a parents' welcome. Some day you shall know me and the reasons why I left little Nora at your door. M. C."

Around the child's neck was a tiny gold chain to which was attached a locket, containing the picture of a beautiful woman, the very counterpart of the child in features.

All these discoveries took but a moment's time, and the child, who had stopped its crying, tossed up her little hands and smiled upon Martha Ray, which found its way into her heart, flooding it with joy and sending a thrill of delight throughout her entire being.

Then the good woman took the child, the dear little waif, as she called it, and her husband who had been busy adding fresh fuel to the fire, sat down by her side, the pair presenting a picture of

surprise and radiant happiness seldom seen in this world of ours.

At first, neither of them could speak; they were so completely dazed, as it were, and withal so thoroughly happy in their little waif-treasure; and it had come so suddenly and so opportunely, at the joyous Christmas time, that it almost deprived them of the power of speech.

Martha was first to recover herself, and with her eyes turned heavenward, prayed in solemn tone:

"My God, I thank Thee this night for answering my oft-repeated prayer to Thee, and sending this sweet babe to be loved by us. O Thou who sent the infant Saviour into this world, be Thou our guide, and help us to do our duty in Thy fear. May we love and obey Thy commands, and at last enter into Thy kingdom to live with the angels forever."

"Amen," responded the husband, as he reverently kissed his wife and then the little one.

Hour after hour the couple sat together, and not

until the dawn shone in at the windows did they realize how the time had passed. Theirs was a happiness too complete for expression, and the spirit of love and harmony brooded over and permeated the apartment, that blessed Christmas morning.

The child slept peacefully, while above its little form were those who would love and cherish it as their own.

The six years had passed most happily, and the little waif, by her amiable disposition and winning ways, amply repaid her foster-parents for the care bestowed. When they went from home this Christmas Eve, Nora had been left in charge of a neighbor's daughter, Bessie Cameron, a girl of fifteen, in whom they placed the utmost confidence, and whom Nora had learned to love as a sister.



## CHAPTER II.

THE OLD TENEMENT HOUSE—OLD DAN—NELL BRI-  
EN—TWO SUSPICIOUS CHARACTERS.

**D**OWN on the wharf, near the old Fort, there was a block of dilapidated buildings occupied by those who eked out a living by stealing, and others who had no legitimate means of obtaining a livelihood; comprising overgrown boys reeking with tobacco and profanity, drunkards, skulkers, gutter-snipes and the meanest specimens of humanity, whom the police often had to look after.

The locality itself was extremely repulsive. The tide ebbed and flowed under these buildings, and when it was out the smell of the dock gave a most disagreeable odor. It was very handy, this having the tide under the buildings, as it aided the thieves

in securing their plunder. There were trap-doors, also, in nearly all the lower floors; these were secreted in the daytime by placing an old mattress over them, or covering them up with pieces of carpet. Rope ladders were connected with these trap-doors, never visible by daylight, but brought out when required. Many a dark deed had been perpetrated by the aid of these doors, as a boat could float under them, carrying or bringing its load. Then again, they were so effective to aid one in escaping. The police would drive a man into the first house in the block and suppose him secure. By the aid of confederates he could be secreted under the trap, or if the tide served, avail himself of a boat, and thus pass into the harbor, wheresoever he pleased. There were old junk and rag shops, also drinking-holes where the most abominable liquids were dispensed, eating-rooms where filth predominated. Women of the town of the lowest type had rooms in this block, and it would be difficult throughout the entire county to have found a more

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one more reeking with cor-

man, occupied the middle  
He was a singular character,  
not what he professed to be,  
, who carried on the junk

t in stature, well developed  
physically, and possessed an intelligent counte-  
nance and an eye which pierced directly through  
one whenever he desired to make himself felt. He  
was feared, not loved, and endured simply because  
those who did not love him deemed it prudent to  
let him alone. His premises were always in dis-  
order; here an anchor fluke, there an old piece of  
cable, while all about were scattered piles of rags,  
old hoop-skirts, and bits of iron, brass and other  
metals, his stock in trade. He bought almost  
everything, and four times a year sold out the en-  
tire collection, and commenced gathering in again.

The next door to him was a lodging house,

where they were not particular in regard to the character of the inmates, so long as they paid well. Anything in the shape of man or woman could get accommodations, and no questions asked. The mistress, for there was no master, was a lantern-jawed vixen, with a repulsive countenance, named Nell Brien, whose very look was avarice, and whose conscience had been blunted by years of wickedness. She had a large sum of money on deposit in the Savings Bank, and the joy of her life was to add to it daily.

Among her recent lodgers were two young men, Dick Porter and Will Harvey. Dissipation was visible in their faces, and the old junk man remarked to himself, as he saw them pass his door, one evening, that they were a "precious pair of rascals, up to some deviltry," he'd be bound, and he'd "keep an eye on 'em"—he would. Late in the evening, he saw them sculling about the docks among the vessels, and the next day they brought him some old rope, which he bought without ask-

ing any questions, although he suspected it had been stolen from off the deck of one of the vessels. When he purchased the junk, he took a deliberate survey of the pair, and as they went out, he muttered:

"They 're not in this town for nothing, there's some rascality on foot, I feel certain sure!"

## CHAPTER III.

OLD DAN LISTENS TO A CONVERSATION—THE AB-  
DUCTION OF LITTLE NORA.

**Q**UON the afternoon preceding Christmas Eve, in which the opening scenes of this story are laid, these two worthies were closeted in their room in the boarding-house. Both had been drinking and were quite communicative. Liquor had robbed them of caution, and the old man, while shaving himself in the little back room he occupied, hearing them conversing, listened.

"I'm dead broke," said one of the pair.

"I'm getting decidedly short," remarked the other, "but had a letter to-day, in which our employer asks what we are doing, and why we don't get the child. He says he will give us just three days more and then discharge us!"

"The fool—the cursed fool!" exclaimed the first speaker. "This he can't do so easy. Why, we'd blow on him, and then what? His game would be up, and he would be anxious to make terms and stop our mouths!"

"Listen," said his companion, "you have not heard all. He says by the next mail he will send us another hundred, and that's the last dollar we will get until we produce the child—when we do that, he will pay us the balance!"

"Good enough! Now, what is there to hinder us from doing the job very soon? I've been sounding 'round this forenoon, and heard the mother ask a little girl who was passing—a neighbor's daughter, I suppose—if she would come in this evening and stay with 'Pet,' as she and her husband were going out to make some purchases."

"Is that so? Speak low," said the other. "Luck is, indeed, on our side. By the way, I don't like that old junk fellow; he looks at us too hard."

Depend upon it, we must keep watch of him; he'd block our game, he would."

"Don't chatter so much—let us have more work and less talk. Here's my plan. Go up there to-night, the pair of us, with a covered carriage. You go in and tell the girl staying with 'Pet,' as you call her, that her mother has fallen in a fit and she must go right home. The girl, in her fright, will go—then let us take the child, bring her here, and this very night take a boat and pull for the city, placing her in the Austins' charge at once, and with our two hundred dollars apiece have one glorious time of it in New York!"

They had spoken lower towards the last, and the old man could only hear that they had some plans regarding the stealing of a child; but when and who the child was, he could not tell. He did not suppose it would be that night, and the violent ringing of his door-bell warned him that some one was in waiting. Not hearing anything further, he went into the shop, remarking to himself, "Ha! ha!



my worthies, perhaps I'll have something to say ere you carry out your plans."

The two fully agreed on their plan of abduction, after which one went to the post-office, whence he returned with the promised letter, and tossing a fifty dollar note to his chum, remarked: "See to it that our boat is ready; have plenty of warm clothing and something for the child to eat, as it is likely to be cold on the water to-night."

At eight o'clock, Will Harvey wended his way to Washington street, a very respectable portion of the town, where the Rays resided. He skulked along with his coat collar turned up, glancing neither to the right or left. Dick Porter was a short distance behind, with a covered carriage. Harvey looked carefully around him, then boldly walked up the steps of Mr. Ray's house and rang the bell. Bessie Cameron came to the door, and he told her that her mother had fallen in a fit; he was passing—they begged him in God's name

to go for Bessie, and if she wanted to see her mother alive she must run home at once.

Just as he expected, Bessie did run, and very coolly did he enter the room, and seeing little Nora sitting at the table, smilingly asked her to come with him down stairs, where mamma was waiting. Childlike, she followed, and in a moment was wrapped in a shawl, put into the carriage and driven off!

## CHAPTER IV.

BESSIE CAMERON'S SURPRISE—THE GRIEF OF THE  
RAYS AT THE LOSS OF NORA—THE UNSUCCESS-  
FUL ATTEMPTS TO RECOVER HER.

**B**ESSIE CAMERON ran home as fast as her little legs would carry her. The suddenness of the news had dazed her. She flew up the steps and opened the door, crying, "My poor mother! my poor mother!" Imagine her surprise upon seeing her maternal parent sitting at the table, engaged in that useful occupation of mending a stocking.

"Why, what's the matter, Bessie? Who has been chasing you?"

"Oh, mother, is that really you? And haven't you had a fit? And aren't you dead? Oh, dear!

oh, dear! The man said I must run if I wanted to see you alive again."

As soon as she could, the child told her mother the circumstances which sent her home so hurriedly.

Then the mother anxiously asked, "Where did you leave Nora?"

Like a thunder-clap this question came upon the terrified girl.

"Oh, mother, all I thought of was you. Let me run back as fast as ever I can!"

"I'll go with you, dear," her mother said; "I'm afraid something has happened to the child."

They went to the house as quickly as they could. Everything was as Bessie had left it, with the exception that the child was missing. They hunted all over the house and then called upon the neighbors; but Nora could not be found, and they anxiously waited, with fear and trembling, for the return of Mr. and Mrs. Ray.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sauntering along, with hearts full of happiness, the couple drew near their home, laden down with holiday goods, and conversing pleasantly of the morrow and its anticipated pleasures.

Lifting the door-latch, they were greatly surprised to find several of the neighbors present, with alarm depicted on their countenances. Bessie was the first one to speak, and told her story.

The search was renewed again, but all in vain, and the almost broken-hearted couple were in a state of mind bordering upon despair. All through the night they were wondering and planning, but with little satisfaction.

Mr. Ray, as soon as he was assured that Nora could not be found in the vicinity, had sent to the police station, and the officers were on the alert. Early in the morning, he visited the office of the town's paper and had a notice inserted, offering a reward of \$1,000 for the return of the child. He also had bills printed and sent to the neighboring

towns and cities; but all of no avail. The long hours passed—hours of the most awful suspense, and no tidings came. The entire town was aroused, yet with all the vigilance exercised, they could not find little Nora, the joy of their household.

Her abductors carried her directly to their room in the house at the Fort. They were obliged to make a confidant of the mistress of the establishment, Nell Brien, who, for a consideration, agreed to assist them, but advised that they get her out of town as soon as possible, as suspicion might be roused. The weather was extremely cold and they hardly dared to make the passage in the boat to the city with the child; but concluded to wait until the next night. Nora, now seven years of age, was pacified by means of cake and toys, and was told that her papa and mamma were coming for her very soon. The woman was attracted to the little one and did all in her power to amuse her. It was, indeed, strange to see this woman, abandoned as she was, exhibit such an affection toward

the child, as she spent most of the next day in the little one's company.

The second evening of her abduction, Nora had a crying spell. She had waited long and patiently to see her parents and they had not come. Her little heart was nearly broken with grief, and her cries threatened to arouse the neighborhood. The exertions of all three were necessary to pacify her, and finally sleep was induced by the administering of an opiate. Then a consultation was held, and it was decided that she must go in the boat to B—— that very night, and from there take passage to New York, where the party resided who had such an interest in her as to instigate the child's abduction.

The old junk man had his suspicions aroused by several circumstances. He had read the notice in the paper, and the cries of the child were a link in the chain of evidence he wanted to secure. He listened long that night, until all was quiet, and then went to his bed, resolving that he would put

the officers on the track very early in the morning. At midnight the abductors were busy. Nell took good care that the child should be well wrapped up, beyond the possibility of receiving any harm from the weather. How calmly the little one slept under the influence of the narcotic, and hardened in sin as this woman was, she kissed the little girl often as she prepared her for the midnight journey.

At length, a slight rap was heard under the door of the trap. It was raised, and Bill appeared with a boat which he had stolen from one of the vessels in the harbor. His partners, Dick and Nell, for she had determined to go with them and see that the child was well treated, were ready; and depositing their precious burden in the boat and covering her up, they rowed away in the darkness, the silent stars looking down and no mortal disturbing them in their nefarious work.

We will leave the little waif pursuing her journey, while we take up another thread of our story.



It is early dawn, the day after Christmas. The old junk man had slept soundly, but was astir with the first dawn of light. He prepared his breakfast, of which he partook with a keen appetite, then sat himself down to think. There were but few stirring, as yet, only those who were abroad after their morning dram, and a few fishermen and sailors who had been on a lark and were now going on board their vessels.

"Certain it is," muttered old Dan, "I heard a child crying in Nell Brien's room, last night, there is no dreaming about that. Fool! Why didn't I go in! Now I've got a harder job of it. Let me see. I'll go up to the station at eight o'clock and get an officer to come down this way with a search-warrant."

When the old man returned with the officer, they could not get in, and were obliged to break in the door. All gone! On the floor of the woman's bed-room they found a tiny gold chain and locket. After leaving the house, the captain of one of the

vessels in the harbor met them and stated that his boat was not to be found and it must have been stolen during the night.

Here, then, was a revelation. A boat had been stolen, a locket and chain found, and three suspicious characters were missing!

Old Dan immediately called upon Mr. Ray. The sight of the chain and locket was like an inspiration. It was Nora's, and was on her neck when she was left in the basket, and had never been removed. A closer examination and it was found that the clasp was broken. This told the story, and then they talked over some plan of action. It was thought that the child might be secreted on board some vessel in the harbor, and a strict search was at once made by the entire police force, but without success. In the meantime, old Dan was busy thinking, so busy that he took no notice of anybody, saying not a word.

At length, he said: "It seems to me that this child has been carried off for a purpose. Those

who have taken her are not the ones who wanted her, but the person who does want her is near by in waiting. If some one would go to B—— and have the trains watched, they might possibly get her, yet; although it is possible that she may have been carried off in a vessel. I'll go on in the next train, and will spare no efforts to find the whereabouts of Nell Brien and her two lodgers. If I don't find them now, I'll have some one on their track and catch them when they do return."

Old Dan started on his errand, but returned the next night without success.

The meagre clue thus far obtained inspired hope. It proved that the child was alive. This was joy indeed! But all efforts toward her restoration were fruitless. Little Nora did not return to the Rays. Her abduction was for a purpose, and she was received by those who loved her, and under whose care she fulfilled a glorious mission, as the reader will learn as the story of her life is further perused.

## CHAPTER V.

NORA'S MIDNIGHT PASSAGE—ARRIVAL IN NEW YORK—NORA'S PROMISE TO WILL HARVEY—MEETING WITH THE AUSTINS—NORA IS ENTRANCED WHILE AT SUPPER, AND GIVES SOME MARVELOUS REVELATIONS—ASTONISHMENT OF THE AUSTINS AT THE REMARKABLE POWERS OF THE CHILD-MEDIUM.

**D**OWN the harbor with muffled oars the boat containing little Nora and her three abductors proceeded on its way. The night was cold and still; there was but little wind, and they soon passed by the light-house and considered themselves safe from pursuit. By hard rowing they reached the city at five o'clock in the morning, in time to take the early train for New York. Arriving in the afternoon and calling a hack, they

were driven to the hotel, as per instructions. Will Harvey alighted, and taking Nora with him, ordered the driver to await his return. Entering the hotel by the ladies' door, he was met by an attentive but astonished female attendant, who wondered who this rough man could be with the pretty little girl.

"Is Mr. Austin here?" he asked.

"Please step into the reception room, and I will ascertain," was the pleasant rejoinder.

She soon returned, saying that he was out, but would be back in about half an hour.

Will replied that he would await his coming, and seating himself on a luxuriant lounge, took Nora in his lap. As he gazed into the sweet, pure face of the child, a smile came o'er his features—a smile such as he had when a lad in the lap of his mother, in the old days when he was a merry-hearted child. All the bad appeared to have departed from him, so changed was his expression, and it seemed as if the spirit of that sainted mother, long since gone to her

rest, hovered over him and was endeavoring to win him back from evil into the path of good. He imprinted a kiss on the child's forehead, and then whispering very kindly, said:

"Nora, I'm going to leave you in the care of two of the best friends you have on earth. Trust them and you will be happy. Mr. and Mrs. Ray are not your parents, dear. You will know all about it in time. Only be a good girl, and once in a while think kindly of me, Will Harvey, and when you say your prayers at night, darling, won't you ask God to help me become a better man? I'm going to try and be good. From this hour I'm going to turn over a new leaf. I'm going away to sea. You won't forget me, will you, little one? I've a notion that if you'll promise to pray for me, your words will be heard, and somehow or other it will help me to become a good man."

Great tears were in his eyes as he spoke, and Nora, looking up into his face, said: "Don't cry, Mr. Harvey, I'll pray for you every night, if you'll

only carry me back to mamma and papa Ray. I can't stay away any longer. Take me back, that's a good man! How they must miss their little girl!"

"No, no, Nora, you'll not want to go back when you see your new papa and mamma. Remember, when you say your prayers, to speak a good word for me, won't you?" Promise me this, and I know that I shall be a better man for it."

"Yes, Mr. Harvey, I will pray for you; but I do want to go back." Then she commenced sobbing as if her little heart would break. She was a strange child, very precocious, and in many respects very singular for one of her age. She had manifested decided clairvoyant powers, oftentimes in the morning telling where she had been and what she had seen during the night. Dreams, her friends in R—— used to call them. But they were far from it. The child, with her peculiar organization, actually saw what she described so

vividly, and became a participant in the transactions which she remembered so keenly.

"Don't cry, Nora. Here comes the folks I'm waiting for. Be a good girl and remember your promise."

At this moment there entered a lady and gentleman, elegantly attired, the slight tinge of brown on their faces betokening them as natives of the tropics. The instant the lady saw Nora she quickly approached, and taking the child in her arms, kissed her passionately and called her the most endearing names. The gentleman also testified his joy with smiles and tears. Then remembering that Harvey was present, he instantly checked himself, and taking him into another room, paid him the money as agreed upon.

Harvey thanked him and left the house. Rejoining his companions who were waiting in the hack, he gave Dick his share of the money, and declining their invitation to accompany them, bade them good-bye, filled with high resolves to lead a



better life. The next day he visited the docks in quest of a voyage, and at midnight was sailing down the harbor on a three years' cruise.

Dick and Nell Brien remained in New York a week. They then parted company and the woman returned to R——. She was at once visited by Mr. Ray and the old junk man, but positively denied having seen the child, and did not know anything of her whereabouts or how the chain and locket came in her room. She had been on a visit to some friends and had just returned, she said. Neither threats nor promises could make her divulge anything further, and as they had no proof to the contrary, they were obliged to give up getting any information in that quarter.

Nora was pleased with the lady, and, childlike, asked her name, and then inquired if she was going to take her to papa and mamma Ray.

"My name, dear, is Mrs. Austin, and that gentleman who has gone out is my husband. You are to live with us, darling, and be our little girl. Mr.

and Mrs. Ray are not your parents, and of this you will know more by and by. Very soon we are all going on board of our vessel and have a fine sail to Surinam, where we have a plantation, and where you are going to have nice times. I shall write to papa and mamma Ray, thanking them for their care of you, and telling them that some day they shall come and make you a visit or you may go to see them. After reading what I have to tell them, they will not feel uneasy, but will be pleased to think we have found you."

Nora could not understand all that the lady said, but she was so pleasant and had such charming ways with her, that she felt happy in her presence. Everything in the room was so elegant that it delighted her childish fancy and so occupied her mind that she soon ceased her repinings.

Upon Mr. Austin's return supper was ordered in their room, and Nora's presence seemed like a benediction, so much happiness it infused. She asked so many strange questions, and seemed so much

older than children of her age, that the Austins could not restrain their approbation, but shew it in their looks and actions. A happy trio were they who sat around that table, and the world, viewed through their eyes, seemed a delightful place indeed.

They were almost through with the repast, when of a sudden, Nora closed her eyes and began breathing heavily. Mrs. Austin rose up in alarm, exclaiming:

"Charles, what can ail the child? How strange for one to fall asleep so quickly. She is ill, I fear!"

"Be quiet, my dear wife, one moment, and let me look at her. It is not a natural sleep. It reminds me of the manner in which Miss N——, the celebrated medium, goes into a trance. Let us wait a few moments and see what will come of it. You can see that the child is not unwell or suffering."

Mrs. Austin, who with her husband had become much interested in spiritualism, having seen several wonderful manifestations, immediately acquiesced

in her husband's request. Calming herself, she watched with eager attention the now quiet breathing of the child, and noticed the extreme peacefulness which pervaded her form. Her face was wreathed in a beautiful smile, and her whole manner was like one in the full enjoyment of a delightful dream.

Soon Nora pointed toward the gas light. Mr. Austin at once divined her wish and turned the light partly down; then locked the door to be certain of no intrusion. The child nodded her head, as if to thank him for thus quickly interpreting her wishes, and then commenced singing, in a voice of great purity and sweetness, the verses of that beautiful hymn:

“Over the river they beckon to me,  
Loved ones gone to the other shore.”

Such harmony from one so young, such delicious music as was poured forth from the lips of this little Nora Ray, filled the hearts of these her new-

found friends with astonishment mingled with deep reverence.

As soon as the 'singing' ceased, the child commenced talking, giving a statement concerning her birthplace, which was at plantation "Silver Water," Surinam, how in infancy she was abducted from her home, giving day and date, as well as the name of the person who abducted her, the two who caused it and their reasons for wishing her got rid of. She next related how the Rays found her at night, and many interesting and valuable details which caused much rejoicing in the hearts of Mr. and Mrs. Austin, as the knowledge given supplied the missing links needed for Mr. Austin's success in obtaining Nora's property from those who had no right to it. It was a marvelous test and rich in its intrinsic value. To complete the evidence and bring it directly home to the hearts of her astonished listeners, Nora described with absolute minuteness the plantation of Mr. Austin, telling what was occurring there at the very moment, portray-

ing what she saw, the persons at work, and most wonderful of all, she told of the drowning and recovery of the body of Samson, a little colored lad of Mrs. Austin's housekeeper, giving the exact hour when he met his death, the circumstances connected with it, the hour and whereabouts of finding the body, and the person who brought it to his mother. A more astonished pair could not easily be found. They could scarcely credit their senses, that such a wee little bit of humanity possessed the wonderful powers of mediumship—that her organism could be used by those who had gone on before—had passed from the mortal to the immortal, and yet could make their influence felt.

Mr. Austin carefully noted down the statements made by Nora in her trance state, that he might test their correctness. He was satisfied that they were all true, as he had received many of the facts from a medium in the city, the week previous, a lady to whom he was an entire stranger. He visited her merely out of curiosity, and, to his great

astonishment, she revealed to him that a great wrong had been perpetrated upon his friend's child, that she had been abducted from her plantation home, was left on Mr. Ray's door-step, and he could prove the truth of the assertions if he would visit the town of R——. He went there and found everything as had been stated, but did not make himself known to the Rays, as he had been cautioned not to do so. He was then made acquainted with the best means to get possession of the child, in order that he might become the instrument of assisting one who in years agone, when in earth life, was his dearest earthly friend, and he had followed the instructions. Now he had found out, to his great joy and astonishment, that little Nora was a reliable and remarkable medium, and he and his wife were intensely happy.

After half an hour's time, Nora awoke, and was surprised to learn that she had been asleep so long. Not a word did she utter which would convey the slightest intimation that she was the least conscious

of talking during this sleep. All she knew was, that she had dreamed of beautiful trees and flowers, and of sailing up a river with her new friends, the Austins. They did not make any explanations or intimate to the little one anything which would give her any knowledge that she possessed mediumistic powers, fearing that it might have a retarding influence, and prevent her giving way to the controlling power. Long after they retired for the night, they talked of the child and her marvelous gift—a gift which would impart so much knowledge to them and become a blessing, as they fondly hoped, to the world. To them Spiritualism, with its beautiful philosophy and startling phenomena, was becoming a reality, and now most remarkable tests had been given, through one whom they knew to be *true*, whom they knew *could* not deceive them, as it was beyond her powers, when in the normal state, to use the language, give such glowing descriptions, and enter into the details of plantation life, as she had on that evening.



The next day, Nora, with her new-found friends, took a look around the city. Stepping into a Broadway toy-shop, Mrs. Austin bought for her one of those creeping dolls, which was received by Nora with a happy heart. Other toys and some books were purchased, which were to amuse her on the passage, and the child was delighted with her gifts. A ride to Central Park concluded the day's sight-seeing, and the little one was glad enough to be put to bed soon after supper.

During the evening a letter was written by Mr. Austin to Edgar Ray, informing him that the child was safe, and was soon to go abroad. The friends with whom she now was loved her as they loved their lives; and in course of time, after she had accomplished the purpose for which she had been abducted—the restoration of her just rights from those who had defrauded her—he would be informed of her whereabouts and might come and see her. Search would be useless. "But rest assured your

darling is our darling also, and as we deal with her, we hope that God may deal with us."

Such was the purport of the letter. It was received by the Rays with mingled joy and grief. They missed the bright smiles of the little girl who had been such a treasure to their household—missed her cunning ways, her sweet temper and her loving presence. They must now wait and hope, as they had confidence by the tenor of the letter that Nora was indeed in good hands. There was something mysterious about it, something they could not fathom, and they wisely resolved to hope for the best and leave the event with that over-ruling Power in whom they devoutly believed.

## CHAPTER VI.

DEPARTURE FOR SURINAM—ANOTHER REMARKABLE TEST OF SPIRIT POWER—THE LIVES OF TWO SHIPWRECKED SEAMEN SAVED THROUGH NORA'S MEDIUMSHIP.

**I**T was a bright moonlight evening when the Austins went on board the good brig "Sea Breeze," accompanied by Nora Ray, as they yet called her. The brig was owned by Mr. Austin, and made frequent passages from his plantation, loaded with the products thereof. Captain Tyler, her commander, was a jolly son of Neptune, and deeply attached to the Austins. In addition to being Master of the vessel, he was also the consignee, and was fully trusted by his employer, who made him his friend and confidant.

There had been a head wind for several days, and as it had now changed into the right corner, the Captain deemed it best to take advantage of it and sail that night. And now that the child was secure and their business all finished, the Austins were very glad to start on the homeward passage. The pilot came on board at ten o'clock; the "Sea Breeze" was at once towed down the bay and immediately put to sea.

Thirty-six hours' run brought them into the Gulf Stream, where the atmosphere was tempered down to a softness which rendered it highly invigorating and a most delightful contrast to the cold which they had left behind.

The "Sea Breeze" was a fast sailer and had very fine accommodations. The days passed swiftly, the hours gliding by on joyous wings, little Nora entwining herself by her loving spirit and winning ways closely about the hearts of her new-found friends.

Not a word had ever been uttered to her con-

cerning the affair which had occurred in the hotel parlor; but the couple frequently alluded to it when by themselves, and were anxiously awaiting some further manifestations of spirit power.

On the thirteenth day out, after supper had been partaken of, Mr. and Mrs. Austin and little Nora were on deck watching the sun go down. It was one of those beautiful sunsets often seen and enjoyed at sea, where the sublime and peaceful surroundings exhale their wonderful and inspiring influences, rendering one peculiarly susceptible to drink in and appreciate the glorious beauties there displayed, and turn the heart with thankfulness toward the great Giver of life and its countless blessings. The western horizon was one mass of gorgeously beautiful tints, lighted up with a splendor which no artist could reproduce upon canvas. Massive banks of golden clouds hung quivering o'er the sea, changing their beauties as the sun sank lower, reflecting their magical combinations of colors, swiftly changing and scintillating, impart-

ing a scene of beauty which the eye never tires of gazing upon, filling the soul with ecstatic joy. There was scarcely a ripple on the surface of the ocean; nature was in one of her calmest moods, and air, sky and water seemed charged with a spirit of harmony flowing in limpid streams direct from that other world, toward which we are all hastening, and from which those of our dear ones can come and give us the tidings of love and immortality we so much long for.

The happy trio stood gazing rapturously upon the beautiful panoramic picture, painted by the living God, reproduced for centuries, and yet the Great Artist has never duplicated a sunset scene; so wondrous is His power that fresh and vivid portrayals are given with each going down thereof. So absorbed were they by the scene, that neither spoke. The spirit of the hour seemed to have descended upon their hearts and held them captive.

Nora was first to break the silence, and taking Mrs. Austin's hand, whispered:

"Mamma, take me into my room. I feel so funny, just as I did when I went off to sleep that night in New York."

Mr. and Mrs. A. did not need a second bidding, and entering the stateroom, Nora asked them to close the door.

Then the little girl laughingly said that she wasn't going to wait to be undressed, but must have a little nap, she was *so* sleepy.

In a moment or two Nora was apparently in dream-land, breathing and appearing like a child fast asleep. Reaching out her hand she grasped that of Mr. Austin, and in a voice which sounded like that of a gruff old sailor, and every action betokening that she was controlled by such a personage, exclaimed:

"Avast there, shipmate, and let me come alongside! I've something to say, which I wish you to believe and act upon! My name on earth was David Welch—went down in the ship "Sunbeam," off Cape Horn. But nothing of that! I'm here

to-day to save two poor fellows who are all that's left of a boat's crew, who left their vessel, the "Mary," because she went from under them. They are fifty miles nor'-nor'-west from here. Tell your Captain to bring his brig up in the wind and run on that course until daylight, and I'll do the rest! You'll save the men if you follow these directions, and upon your heads be their deaths if you don't! Try this, and if it don't come true, then call this spiritualism the works of the d——l if you're a mind to. But in God's dear name, good people, heed what I have said!"

Nora then awoke and wanted to go to bed. Mrs. Austin complied with her request, and hearing her repeat her evening prayer, kissed her good-night and rejoined her husband on deck.

The couple were astounded, not only at the intelligence which had just been conveyed, but at the wonderful powers and perfect ease by which little Nora was controlled—her entire unconsciousness and her freedom from guile.



"Husband," said Mrs. Austin, "we have a duty to perform. How shall we accomplish it? I just as much believe that those poor fellows are adrift in that boat, fifty miles to the north-north-west, as I believe that I am here with you. We must save them, or I shall know no peace hereafter. How can we accomplish it?"

"Annie, I have thought of an expedient. We must make Captain Tyler our partial confidant. I will call him, and you listen to what I have to say, and if it please you to make any suggestion, why, do so."

The Captain came and sat with them, as he frequently did of an evening. The conversation turned upon the passage and the quick time they had thus far made. At a convenient opportunity, Mr. Austin asked him if he believed in dreams.

"To some extent," was the reply.

"Would you follow out the convictions which a dream or an impression made upon you, if by so doing, there was the possibility of saving life, run-

"Why, yes," replied the Captain, "the best of mortals miss it once in a while, and it's pretty hard sometimes to know whether you're right or not. This notion you've got in your head now seems kind of moonshiny to me; but that's nothing here nor there; if in thirty minutes from now you say the word, we'll put her on the wind and run nor'-nor'-west till daylight."

"All right, Captain, I felt that you would be willing to give me my way in this, and we will talk it all over after daylight in the morning."

Mr. Austin, accompanied by his wife, went in to see how Nora was resting, and had hardly opened the stateroom door, when the child, in the gruff voice, with which the sailor had spoken, exclaimed:

"The half hour will make no difference. We will save them at daylight. Put a strong light at the mast-head, as that will encourage the poor fellows some hours before you get to them. Don't give this up. Do as I bid you, and stick to it to the very last moment ere the sun rises!"

Mr. Austin went immediately upon deck. His feelings were such that he must have air and exercise. His imagination pictured the two sailors looking for succor, and he nervously paced the deck, waiting anxiously for the half hour to pass, fearful that it might upset the whole plan. But the last message somewhat reassured him, and taking his wife's arm they promenaded the deck, talking over the strange affair, hoping that it might prove true, and they be the means of saving life, and also add another strong test to the reliability of spiritual communication when given through a truthful medium.

At eight o'clock, Captain Tyler joined them, and upon being assured that Mr. Austin had not changed his mind, gave orders to bring the vessel on the wind, with a course N. N. W., and to set a light in the cross-trees.

The mate knew his position too well to make any remark at such a queer command; but he kept up a tremendous thinking as he gave the orders.

The brig moved slowly over the waters, the stars twinkled brightly overhead, and the Southern Cross shone brightly among her sister constellations. The weather was mild, with indications of a fresh breeze at midnight. At nine o'clock, the Captain bade his passengers good-night, and as he descended into the cabin, gave strict orders for the officer on deck to call him if there was any change in the weather. Mr. and Mrs. Austin also retired to their stateroom; but not to sleep. Their minds were too full of the events of the past two hours to admit of that.

The brig tossed up and down over the placid waters, making but a few knots per hour, it was so calm, until midnight drew near. Then a change came—a slight wind arose, growing stronger and stronger, and by one o'clock the craft was bowling along with a whole sail breeze and everything drawing.

The Captain was called, and when he went on

deck Mr. Austin went also, leaving Mrs. Austin to catch a nap if she could.

Lighting their cigars, the two walked the deck, ever and anon casting their eyes over the vast expanse of water. At one time Mr. Austin thought he heard a cry; but supposing it to be his imagination, said not a word.

Half an hour more and the dawn would break. Faint tinges even now were visible on the eastern horizon, and still nothing had as yet come of the promise.

"How far should you judge we had gone on this course, Captain?"

"Perhaps forty odd miles. We shall have a glorious run before it, whenever you say square away. Don't hurry, take your own time; but I'm a little impatient to get on our course again."

Mr. Austin made no reply, for he felt a little uneasy, and was beginning to think that he had been made the victim of some deceitful spirit. Just then Mrs. Austin came up, and approaching the Cap-

tain, asked if he was sure the man at the wheel was steering a direct N. N. W. course.

While the Captain went to examine the compass, she whispered to her husband that the old sailor had come again, and said that they were several points off of their course, and it must be corrected at once.

The Captain returned and stated that there was a green-hand at the wheel who had been "steering wild" for some time.

"Captain," pleaded Mrs. Austin, "will you not take the wheel a little while? Please do, just to oblige me."

"With all pleasure, madam," and he instantly complied with her request.

"That was what the old sailor wanted," she told her husband. "Now watch sharply the next fifteen minutes!"

Mr. Austin did watch sharply, with every sense keenly on the alert, his eyes scanning the waste of waters, his ears listening for the call of distress

which had been predicted. Again he heard the cry, and this time he sprang into the forward rigging.

Dawn was fast breaking, and faint streaks of light were creeping along the sea from its farthest extremity.

"Save us! save us! We're on your lee bow! Don't pass us by!"

The cry came from off the water. It sounded like the last wail of some poor fellow in his dire necessity. A cry wrung from the heart in the depths of its innermost sorrow.

"Captain, did you hear that?"

"I did sir," was the response, and giving the wheel to the man, he instantly joined Mr. Austin.

"I can see them! Cannot you? They're down to leeward, about half a mile away! Good God! Lower away a boat my men! Quick!"

The vessel was brought up in the wind. The boat was lowered, and Captain Tyler and Mr.

Austin, with four strong sailors, were in her in a twinkling.

"Steward, pass me a bottle of wine, quick!" was his order. It was done, and away they pulled.

The boat was reached, and there upon the thwarts was one poor fellow, perfectly unconscious, his heart beating with a light flutter, while his companion, having just strength enough to say, "Thank God, they've come," dropped insensible.

It was but the work of a moment for the two men to take off their coats and wrap the poor sufferers therein. Then the Captain broke off the neck of the bottle and poured a few drops of the wine into their mouths.

By this time the vessel was reached, and the men were taken on board, where, after a week of careful nursing, they began to recuperate, and both in time recovered their usual vigor.

Captain Tyler was astounded by the termination of this affair, which he looked upon from the first as exceedingly visionary. The Austins were de-



lighted, first that they had been instrumental in saving life, and secondly because it was another valuable test of the beautiful doctrine of spirit influence, which they had so many reasons to believe to be true. Their faith was strengthened, and their love for the little Nora greatly intensified.

## CHAPTER VII.

ARRIVAL AT SURINAM—UP THE RIVER TO PARAMARIBO—A MESSAGE OF WARNING FROM AUNT SUSIE—THE REVELATION IN REGARD TO THE DROWNING OF SAMPSON IS VERIFIED.

**O**N sped the good brig "Sea Breeze," and on the morning of the twenty-fourth day out, the light-ship off Braam's Point was sighted. At noon time, with a fair wind, she entered the Surinam river, and after stopping at Fort Amsterdam, for inspection by the boarding-officer, as is the custom for all vessels, whether inward or outward bound, she was got underway, and during the latter part of the afternoon crept up river and came to anchor off Paramaribo, the capital city of the colony.

The trip up the river had been one of the

most intense enjoyment to Nora. Everything was new to her. The plantations, with their beautiful verdure, the dashing, rolling water, the songs of the negro boatmen going to and returning from the city, the beautiful plumage of the birds, which lined the shores, the tall chimneys of the sugar houses, belching forth their volumes of black smoke, the variegated colors of the flowers, all presented a scene of loveliness which reminded her of what had been told her of Edenland. The child's entire being was permeated with the beauties and the harmony which existed in that delightful portion of the tropics.

As was anticipated, Mr. Austin's boat from plantation "Enslandiah," was in town, waiting to convey the master and mistress up river. It was, however, decided that they should go ashore to the house of a relative to stay a few days, in order that Nora and Mrs. Austin might get rested from their voyage.

The anchor was hardly down ere a score or more

of boats put off from the shore, containing the friends of the Austins and those of Captain Tyler. Very hearty were the welcomes and cordial the greetings, and it was nine o'clock ere the passengers went on shore. Here they were hospitably received, and glad to retire as soon as possible.

The next morning, previous to going down to breakfast, as Nora was in the sleeping-room with Mr. and Mrs. Austin, the same drowsy feeling which has been previously described, came over her, and she was again entranced. The first salutation which greeted her expectant listeners, was:

"How do you do, folks? Glad to see you. I'm Susie, Aunt Susie, you used to call me when I waited on der table at de old plantation."

"How do you do, Susie?" exclaimed the pair. "We are glad to hear from you. Now tell us what you want to, and we will be all attention."

"Tank you, massa and missis. Me berry glad you take an interest in dese things. Dey be true, ebbery word, when dey come from reliable spirits.

Me only want to say to-day, take good care of Missy Nora, for if some folks dat I knows of, knew who she was, dey would make trubble. You understand. Don't say a word to a libin soul, of what you mean to do. Be cautious, for it will take a long time ere you get through wid de job you hab on hand. Aunt Susie will do all she can to help yer in de good cause. You know I'll tell yer de truff, and work for yer interests, as I lub yer both a big heap. Good day; some time I'll come and stay longer."

The information which had been imparted, together with the fact that "Aunt Susie," as she styled herself, was well known to Mr. and Mrs. Austin, having lived at their plantation several years, and died about six months' previous, was another test of spirit communication, and of the peculiar powers possessed by Nora.

After breakfast, one of the plantation hands accosted Mr. Austin, and with tears streaming down his cheeks, told of the drowning of Sampson, the

housekeeper's child, the day and hour exactly according with that told by Nora in the hotel parlor at New York some five weeks' before. Here then was another proof, and the heart of Mr. Austin swelled within his bosom as he saw the evidence accumulating which was to demonstrate the truth of a doctrine which to him was full of such wonderful beauties, and fraught with so much good to humanity.

The three days following were the most enjoyable which had ever occurred in Nora's brief lifetime. With her adopted parents she rode about the city, enjoying the many new and strange sights which were presented. The ride along the water side was replete with interest. The Dutch galiots riding at their anchors in the stream, were queer looking crafts to her eyes; the almost nude black boys and girls playing in the streets; the negro women with children strapped on their backs, and huge burdens on their heads; the market place, carried on solely by negresses, with its variety of

fruit and continual chatter, which accompanied the buying and selling,—were sources of interest and wonderment to her impressible mind. They rode into Fort Zeelandia, where they were cordially received and spent a delightful hour. Then they drove out into the country, where fine gardens and a beautiful display of tropical flowers, in all their beauty, greeted the eye and added to the delights of the drive.

On the fourth day preparations were made to go to the plantation, and on the morning of the fifth, an hour before sunrise, the party embarked on one of those commodious boats which form the mode of travel between town and plantation.

## CHAPTER VIII.

LIFE AT PLANTATION—AUNT SUSIE COMES AGAIN  
—PLANTATION "SILVER WATER."

**T**HAT trip to plantation lingered long in Nora's memory. She seemed like one enchanted, so new and delightful the scene. The river with its tiny wavelets; the plantations with their acres of sugar-cane extending as far as the eye could reach; the plantain groves, the grand old trees bending over the river, affording such a refreshing shade; the singing of the negroes, as they kept time with their oars; the delicious air of the tropics, so full of health-giving qualities; all combined to fill her heart and soul with that deep sense of happiness which makes existence so delightful, and renders this world such a grand place to live in.



Mr. and Mrs. Austin watched their adopted daughter with eyes beaming with love and hearts filled with joy. How they worshipped that little waif—she was so pure, so loving, and above all, had that priceless gift of mediumship, whereby she could hold communion with those gone on before.

Plantation "Enslandiah" was situated some forty miles up the Surinam river, and was about eight hours' pull. To-day they did not allow the boatmen to row too fast; they saw that Nora was enjoying the trip so much, that they had it prolonged. What with the stoppages for dinner, and the slow pulling, they did not arrive until the middle of the afternoon.

As soon as the boat was visible, down to the walk which led to the water side, came the servants of the house and such of the field-hands as could be spared from duty. They were arranged on each side, and as the boat came up to the landing, such shouts as they gave, and such cordial greetings to their master and mistress. It would have con-

vinced any one that there was a bond of affection existing between these slaves and their master and mistress, could they have witnessed the meeting.

Nora found much to take up her time at plantation, and was allowed to roam at will for the first six months of her sojourn. She had in this time learned the names of the slaves and all the routine of plantation life—the many delightful walks and drives, for she had a pony of her own and a faithful servant girl to accompany her. The negroes worshipped her, she was so kind and ready to do anything which would enhance their happiness. At the end of six months, when she was nearly eight years of age, Mrs. Austin commenced a regular routine of education, and found an apt and willing scholar. As she advanced, a teacher was secured from the city, and Nora at fifteen was in possession of that inestimable treasure—a liberal education. She was a very fine musician, having a natural talent in that direction, which had been cultivated until her touch on the piano was marvel-

ous, and her singing a source of delight to the many visitors at plantation. Her sixteenth year was celebrated by a three months' sojourn in the city, where she had every advantage which society afforded, and her perfect features and many accomplishments won for her a large circle of ardent friends and admirers.

Her sphere, however, was at plantation. It seemed as if she was born for that peculiar life, which is so replete with happiness to those who can fully appreciate it. She was now a beautiful young lady, with a wealth of golden hair clustering in beautiful curls, her features radiant with happiness, the royal seal of purity and intelligence indelibly stamped thereon. The slaves loved her because she was their friend. Were they sick, she visited them and attended to their wants. Were they in trouble, she soothed their perturbed spirits, and taught them of a better and a happier land just beyond this, where their freed spirits would find a refuge and a home, after the trials of the

earth-life were over. She told them of their departed, who were not dead, but had exchanged the mortal for the immortal. Then she would sing to them plaintive plantation melodies, and these impulsive beings would be in ecstasies of rapture as they listened to the melody and drank in the sweet notes which she sang.

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Twenty miles above "Enslandiah" was the plantation "Silver Water," noted as one of the finest in the colony. It was occupied by two brothers named Hartze, who inherited it from their brother, previous to whose decease they worked upon it as his overseers. It had been rumored at the time of their taking possession that there was some illegality concerning their right to take the property, and some even went so far as to say that a fearful crime had been committed; but these rumors were soon forgotten, and probably the matter never would have been thought of again, had not Mr. Austin received the wonderful revelations concern-

ing it from the lady medium in New York city, and still further particulars from Nora and "Aunt Susie." The years had passed, and although Mr. Austin had not abandoned the undertaking, but had kept it constantly in mind, he was assured that the time for action had not yet come, as he must have incontestable proofs ere he could hope for success.

The Austins had visited "Silver Water" several times, and felt positive, from the indications manifested, that there was something preying upon the minds of the brothers, which could not be relieved even by the splendid success which had attended their plantation management. It was evident that there was something in the past which had left its impress on their hearts, and from the knowledge which Mr. Austin had received, he could very easily account for the uneasiness and anxiety which they manifested, although it might prove unaccountable to others.

Nora had accompanied them on a recent visit,

and was delighted with the plantation and its surroundings. She greatly enjoyed the visit, and upon her return home, fell into one of her strange sleeps. "Aunt Susie" soon obtained control, and gave the information which was so much needed. She made some strange revelations, which, if acted upon, would produce a great excitement in the colony. Long did Mr. Austin sit with his wife on the portico that night, talking over the wonderful particulars which "Susie" had transmitted. But how to act? That was the question. They were both well assured that "Susie," or whoever or whatever the power that held control of Nora, was not a myth. The knowledge given of the plantations thereabouts; the mentioning of the names of persons who had been dead for years, to recall which, Mr. Austin was obliged to seek information of some of the aged negroes, and found it correct in every particular; the details of events which had occurred at the time the brothers took possession, and which he had almost forgot-

ten, came as fresh and authentic from this power, as if they had occurred only a few days previous.

How to act. What to do. These were the queries which constantly came up before the minds of the couple as they sat that night, with the moon shining brightly o'erhead, and the waters of the river gleaming like molten silver under its bright beams.

"I will wait a little longer, darling," was Mr. Austin's response to a question which his wife propounded. "We cannot afford to let this go by default, now, and a few months will not matter much. We will wait, my love, and perhaps we shall get further advices, which will give us something more direct." He felt strongly impressed that the time was not far distant when he would get some communications which would aid him in bringing forward a certain witness he needed. He felt positive that she was in earth life, and that he must have her evidence, direct, before he could ever hope to make a successful effort in the case which had for

years been on his mind. He had been patiently waiting to complete his net work of evidence, and feeling assured that he was right, felt encouraged to await further developments. These impressions were correct, as further revelations amply bear witness.



## CHAPTER IX.

## NORA'S PROMISE TO WILL HARVEY AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE.

**N**ORA had kept her promise made to Will Harvey on the evening he left her in the hotel parlor in New York. Every night, as she prayed to the Father above, she asked a blessing for the wanderer, and prayed that God would protect him and keep him in the right path. She had also corresponded with the Rays, sending her letters by Captain Tyler, who delivered them personally and received the answers, keeping inviolate the knowledge of her whereabouts. She had sent her photograph from time to time, and they were rejoiced to learn of her happiness, and delighted to gaze upon her features, witnessing the changes

which the years had wrought; but never ceasing to wonder where she was, and why she had been abducted.

The Austins, accompanied by Nora, made a visit to Paramaribo in February of 185-. They were the guests of the Commandant of the Fort, and their tarry was made the occasion of a series of parties in which Nora reigned as the belle. Charming in manner, beautiful in person, intelligent, captivating, it was no wonder that the young men, representing the best families, were attracted to her. But she treated all alike, not showing any preferences, and this made her all the more attractive. It was a season of great brilliancy and the city was alive with gayety.

One morning there came to the Fort a boat's crew of four men who had been saved from a vessel which had capsized some four hundred miles from the coast. These men had rowed all that distance, and having but little provision, were well-nigh exhausted. They had been most tenderly

received by the Commandant, and as he was narrating their story, he asked the ladies if they would not like to see them and have them relate the particulars of their perilous passage. They consented and walked out into the yard, where the men were seated under an orange tree. Nora questioned them, and the tears ran down her cheeks as she listened to the narration concerning the death of one of their comrades.

"He was a strange man, Missis," the sailor continued, "and often during our watch on deck, he would say, 'If she's alive she is praying for me.'"

"And then he told me how he was once a wild lad and had done many wrong actions. One time he abducted a young child. He knew he was not doing her any harm, as the people who employed him were very desirous of getting her and would better her condition in life. He got her, and the few days spent in her company made a great change in him. It seemed as if his mother, who had been dead several years, was near him when in the child's

presence, and she made a wonderful impression. 'Steve,' he said, 'I promised the child I would reform if she would pray for me when she said her prayers at night, and I have kept my promise. I know she has prayed for me, and some nights, while at sea, I have fancied that I heard her voice asking God to take care of the poor sailor. It's been a great comfort to me. She must now be a young lady grown.'"

"Did he tell you her name?" anxiously inquired Nora, for the story came home to her heart.

"Just before he died he told me that they called her Nora Ray; and he thanked God for the promise she had given, for it had made a man of him."

"And what was your comrade's name?" asked Nora.

"Will Harvey was the name he went by, Missis."

All the ladies were much interested in the sailor's story, and they regarded it as a remarkable instance of personal influence, and the incident was the subject of a considerable amount of moralizing.

After tea, as the Austins were sitting on the cool piazza, Nora quietly said: "It was a hard matter for me to retain my self-possession, when the sailor told his story to-day. I am so glad that I kept my promise to Mr. Harvey, and he remembered me—and my name was on his lips just before his soul took flight for the better world."

"It was, indeed, a most remarkable instance; but we must be careful and not make any disclosures. You are ours, darling, and we do not wish any other claims to be made."

"I am content," she laughingly replied.

## CHAPTER X.

NEW YEAR'S FESTIVITIES AT PLANTATION—NORA IS DEVELOPED AS A WRITING MEDIUM—NORA'S FATHER FROM SPIRIT LAND FURNISHES THE CLUE WANTED—FURTHER REVELATIONS.

**O**F all the pleasing events in Nora's Surinam life, the celebration of "New Yara," as the negroes term it, gave her the most intense satisfaction. Each year the pleasures seemed to increase, and that of 185- was made memorable, not only for the enjoyments of the occasion, but for the remarkable and weird-like incidents which occurred.

The last day of 185- had dawned, and the near approach of the new-born year was looked forward to with great interest at plantation "Enslandiah." Very extensive had been the preparations for cele-

brating the festival, and the negroes had been given the two weeks in which to make merry and dance and sing to their hearts' content. It was a scene of busy, bustling animation, and all the colored people, who were as happy as mortals could possibly be and exist, were dressed in their best, waiting for sundown, when the festivities were to commence. The hour came at last, and a large bonfire was lighted in the square in front of the balcony, where sat Nora with her foster-parents and visitors from town who had come up to pass the holidays. Around the bonfire the sons of toil, with their wives, sweethearts and children, gathered and participated in the dance. Such dancing is very rarely witnessed. No description could do it justice—such gracefulness, such fancy steps and perfect abandonment—the females, dressed in all the colors of the rainbow, with turbans on their heads, gayly decked with beads and feathers. How they did enjoy it! The dancing was interspersed with singing and marching, and the party watched their

dusky figures, which presented a weird-like appearance by the light of the fire, until the new year was two hours' old, then retired; but the noise and singing kept them awake until nearly sunrise.

New Year's morning dawned with all the splendor peculiar to the tropics. Such a glorious sunrise, as welcomed the new comer, lighting far and near with its radiance. All was hilarity, nothing rude, but a genuine outburst of good feeling. Everything indicated that "New Yara" had really come. All day long this dancing and merry-making continued, and troops of light-hearted dusky lads and lassies from neighboring plantations, "put in an appearance," helped along the good time, and then passed on to other scenes of enjoyment.

For a fortnight the festivities were continued, and when the last night came, it seemed as if they crowded into the brief hours which constituted it, all the revelry of the fourteen days—so loath were they to let go their hold on these halcyon moments,



the departure of which was to usher in the old routine of labor with its ceaseless round of duties.

On the ninth day of the New Year's festivities, Nora experienced an unaccountable feeling—something which she could not explain. She was exceedingly drowsy, and strange, weird thoughts and fancies passed rapidly through her mind, leaving no lasting impression; but were extremely vivid and exhilarating; and although trying hard to drive the feelings away, she could not effect her purpose. At noontime she excused herself to her visitors, and entering her chamber, felt a drowsiness come over her which she could not resist, and soon fell into a deep slumber, which lasted until near sunset. Then she awoke, feeling greatly refreshed, but astonished at the length of time, as it was unusual for her to sleep long during the day. She had no reason to doubt but that she had been soundly sleeping all the time she was in the chamber; but imagine her surprise, upon going to her writing-desk, to find thereon two sheets of paper closely written

upon, and this writing had been done by herself (for it was her own hand-writing), when asleep, and she was totally unconscious when it was written, and of its purport. With an anxious heart she read as follows:

“NORA HARTZE:—This is your name, Nora dear. It is neither Ray nor Austin, but Hartze; and time will prove it, although you will be obliged to suffer ere your rights are secured. Time is not only the great healer, but the restorer; and in time you will be restored to that which is unlawfully withheld. All will be made clear in due season; until then, Nora, enjoy your life with the friends whom God has given you. Do all the good you can, make friends and keep them, and above all do not seek to restrain your God-given powers of mediumship. It will be to you as a guide by day and a shield by night, an ever-present help and comfort in the days when help and comfort from this source will be needed. It will save you after you have passed through many unforeseen dangers. Spirit friends are powerful for good when they are allowed to work free and untrammelled through organisms made

to receive Heavenly inspirations. Such is yours. From your very birth you have been subject to the control of spirit friends, and under such influences you will be guided and aided to the latest day of your existence.

My good friend Austin and his wife have done nobly in carrying out my instructions given through other mediums as well as through your own organism. As time flows along, they will discern by intuition and impressions, what further is needed, and when the hour comes for active, personal effort, you and your friends will be ready. Then all will be revealed, and I in my spirit home will rest content and continue on to the bright spheres above, after my purpose is accomplished and your rights are restored. Do not let this letter disturb you, it is only a chain in the link of events which will give to you the property which is rightfully yours, but now withheld. Good-night, my darling child, and ask friend Austin to sit with you to-morrow evening, at ten o'clock, in the reception room, alone. I will come then and give further developments.

Your loving father, in spirit life,

FRANCIS HARTZE."

Nora read and re-read this epistle, hardly believing that she was in possession of her senses. She was entirely unprepared for such a disclosure, as she had never been told that she possessed mediumistic powers. The fact now seemed to be indelibly impressed upon her through her intuitive power, and did not disturb her; but she made up her mind to seek an explanation from her foster-parents by showing them the letter and asking for information concerning the strange gift of which it was said she was the possessor.

At a convenient time during the evening she exhibited the precious document, and Mr. Austin made a full explanation, which greatly surprised her. The letter was also a remarkable test; it gave them most intense satisfaction to hear so direct from Nora's father, and it also showed her in another phase of development—a writing medium—a phase which had never been manifested by her before, and coming so mysteriously as it did, and giving such clear and concise intelligence, it made a deep im-

pression upon all three, strengthening their faith and giving promise of much needed assistance in the mission which was to be accomplished.

In the evening, at the appointed hour, Nora and Mr. Austin sat as requested. Nora soon sank into what appeared to be a tranquil slumber, her countenance aglow with a light and expression which seemed transmitted from the spirit world, so beautiful and ethereal was the expression and the wonderful beauty which was reflected therefrom. As she sat there, with the rays of moonlight streaming into the room, robed in garments of snowy white, she seemed more like a denizen of the angel world than a mortal being. The hour and the occasion lent much to add to this fancy, and when she spoke, Mr. Austin listened with breathless attention.

The seance lasted nearly an hour and was of a most gratifying nature. Friends and relatives of the Austin family came and spoke of the other life, giving details of the spirit world, which were of great interest. Mr. Hartze went into the particu-

lars of his death, stating all the circumstances attending Nora's abduction; and knowing full well that the word of a *spirit* or *ghost* would not be taken in a Court of Justice as evidence, gave information which would greatly assist Mr. Austin in procuring *living* witnesses to testify to the statements which were given, and among these as the principal, he mentioned the nurse of Nora, who abducted her and knew the whole story of her wrongs. So minute was Mr. Hartze, or spirit Hartze, in these details, that he told Mr. Austin, at such a time, naming a date some few weeks ahead, that he wished him to write to the Rays; also to insert a personal in a New York paper; and these would lead the nurse to make known her whereabouts, and she could be induced to come on to Surinam and give her evidence, which would be the means of restoring to Nora her property, and thereby give her the opportunity of doing much good in the world.

The communication was most carefully noted down, and Nora, bidding her foster-father good-

night, was soon in dream-land, with her spirit band of invisibles keeping watch about her couch as she slept, bringing strength and comfort.

The next day Mr. Austin concluded that the time had come when he should inform Nora of the particulars of her life, and among other incidents stated that he received the first intimations of her ownership of plantation "Silver Water" through a communication received from a lady medium in New York city. The persons who controlled the medium at that time, purported to be Mr. and Mrs. Hartze, her father and mother. They explained the whole affair, and also further stated where the child Nora could be found, advising him to have her abducted, as Mr. and Mrs. Ray would not give her up, and any attempts or solicitations to this effect would have defeated the object in view. Mr. Austin first visited the town of R——, and was astonished beyond all power of expression, to find that the Rays did have an adopted child, and that the child had been left in their door porch, and every

particular fully confirmed the statements received from the medium.

He saw the child returning from school, and was again surprised to find that her face and form perfectly agreed with the description which her father and mother had given of her. Having had these demonstrations, he was determined to carry out their instructions relative to her abduction, and, as the reader well knows, was successful. He also fully acquainted her with her possession of wonderful mediumistic powers, giving her all the details of the several seances which she had given them, and of the great service they had been.

Nora was greatly surprised at the facts thus given her, and was fully aware that her powers of mediumship was a matter over which she had not the least control. She was in the hands of God and her invisible friends, and was perfectly willing they should use her mediumistic powers for all good purposes; but obtained a promise from Mr. Austin that in the future he would fully acquaint her with



the purport of all the communications received through her mediumship, which promise he gave and faithfully fulfilled.

Nora's entrancement was now of frequent occurrence, and various were the messages received, from persons of all classes and conditions. The following is one of many, purporting to come from the spirit of her mother, and gave her much comfort and satisfaction. It was written down by Mr. Austin, and entitled,

*The Revelations of True Spiritual Mediumship.*

A true spiritual medium is a revelator, and the revelations thus developed lay hold on things eternal, and are therefore of vast significance. These mediums bring tidings through fixed laws; laws as simple and as everlasting as any of the laws affecting the tides, the moon, the seasons, earthquakes, storms, or others affecting terrestrial things. By a law of God, the Great Spirit, as the Indian properly terms him, some organizations from their birth are freighted with this Divine gift. It is not of their own seeking, as they have no option in the

matter. God creates them and sends them forth into the world with this germ in their being. Some go through an entire lifetime and know not of this pearl of great price entwined into their existence, and they fail in the most important element for which life was breathed into their nostrils. They know it not, and perhaps it is true in many instances, "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise."

But other natures, more sensitive, more spiritual, have the truth thrust upon them, and with the dismal prospect before them of becoming martyrs, as nearly all *true* mediums are martyrs in this era of the world, they consent to use their powers for the good of the world. Then their trials commence! Proscribed by the Church, considered as emissaries of the evil one, reviled, persecuted, vilified—who can blame pure, sensitive woman for shrinking from such an ordeal? But thanks be to God, the revelations they give from dear ones gone beyond the stars, are fraught with so much that touches the tendrils of the heart, that this proscription in time will be removed, and mediums will be cherished as among earth's precious ones.

No mother who has placed her darling babe in its tiny casket and seen the daisies growing above its breast, will ever talk flippantly of a medium, when that medium has become the instrument of allowing her once more to hear the prattle of the dear one who so filled her heart with joy while in the flesh. No husband or wife after becoming convinced through the wonderful powers of mediumship, that their companions, whose faces they last saw touched with the dews of death, motionless, speechless, still, with arms folded and hands done with the earth-work; none of these, I say, after such experiences, would ever entertain any but most reverential regard towards those possessing mediumistic powers.

These revelations are destined to make a marked change in society. They will disarm orthodoxy of its terrors, dispelling the terrible belief which Calvin and others worked so persistently in impressing upon the human mind, viz: That a hell with its burning tortures awaits all the unregenerate, after death has closed the door of mercy.


Spiritualism with its revelations dispels all this, for your own friends, who have crossed the boun-

daries which separate your world from this, bring cheering assurances that God's mercy and love extends beyond the grave, and He will listen to the voice of His children, hear their prayers, and grant their petitions *forevermore!*

Better far to make this your religious study than that of the creeds, for these lay hold of eternal life as known and seen by actual participants, those who were your friends, who lived in your atmosphere, and were of your own life. They have gone before, and looking back, feeling all your wants, knowing your need of light and knowledge concerning the hereafter, send you back the glad tidings, the wonderful revelations, the soul-inspiring words, giving tangible evidence of where they are, what they have experienced, and beckoning you on to that world, where the soul, divested of its fleshly garments, mounts upward and onward toward its full fruition of hopes enkindled here on the earth, of which faint glimpses are vouchsafed through mediumistic revelations.

## CHAPTER XI.

MR. AUSTIN RECEIVES A LETTER WHICH GIVES HIM  
A CLUE—HE VISITS "SILVER WATER" AND RE-  
VEALS HIS PURPOSE OF TESTING NORA'S CLAIM  
TO THE PLANTATION.

R. Austin had now determined to make a commencement in the work of restoring "Silver Water" to its rightful owner. He was influenced to do this, not from any selfish motives, but his friendship to the deceased prompted him as a sacred duty—a duty which he felt assured, if the case was reversed, the deceased would willingly and faithfully perform for him.

The brothers held the property, as he had ascertained, not by will, but simply as the next of kin. A letter which he received about this time gave him a clue which he was very anxious to follow up. A communication from "Aunt Susie" led him to

write to the Rays, and an answer to this letter was awaited with the utmost impatience. Two months passed,—days and weeks of anxiety. He could hardly restrain his impatience; but finally the long expected answer came, and he went to the city in obedience to the demand which was made. What he learned there we will not now make manifest; suffice it to say that he was astounded at the intelligence he received, and more than ever determined to aid in the performance of a deed of justice, which he feared had now been too long deferred, as he learned that it was the intention of the brothers to sell "Silver Water," and already there had been parties to examine the property.

His mind was at once made up. It seemed to him as if the spirit of his friend Hartze was continually about him, urging and entreating that he should proceed at once in the performance of a duty which was now as clear as the noonday sun.

He returned home and revealed to his wife the intelligence he had received.

"Husband, do your duty, fearlessly, and do it promptly," was her advice. "Good angels will guard and strengthen you."

The next morning he ordered his boatman to row him to plantation "Silver Water." During the passage he revolved the incidents connected with the affair over and over in his mind, and resolved upon his course of action. His proofs were positive, and he had taken the precaution, in obedience to a communication received, to obtain affidavits, which could be used in case of the decease of either of the witnesses.

The brothers Hartze were very glad to see him, and proposed that the day be spent in hunting, of which the Surinam planters are very fond. The offer was courteously but firmly declined, by his stating that he had come on important business, and would like to have their close attention.

"With pleasure, and anything we can do for you will be done cheerfully," they replied.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Austin, after they were

After he had left, the brothers held a long council. They were surprised, and wondered what Mr. Austin meant by his threats. Surely the plantation was theirs. Had they not held it for seventeen years, and did they not take good care to establish a clear title before the Court, as the next of kin, after their brother's decease? And now a mutual friend, a neighbor, one whom they both delighted to honor, comes forward with these dark hints and the imperative demand to relinquish the property at the expiration of a week, or submit to have their title investigated. This was enough to set them to thinking, and midnight found them walking in the orange grove. It was evident that they were both very much exercised, and what can be the nature of Mr. Austin's evidence was the question uppermost in their thoughts. They knew of but one solution, and it troubled them greatly. A guilty conscience was tormenting them.



## CHAPTER XII.

## AN IMPORTANT WITNESS—NORA'S CLAIMS VINDICATED.

**T**HE week passed, and no message was received by Mr. Austin. Consequently he held an interview with the Judge Advocate, and a warrant was issued for the appearance of the Hartze brothers at his office, there to bring forward their deeds and claims to plantation "Silver Water."

Monday afternoon was the time appointed for the examination, and promptly at the hour of two Mr. Austin and the brothers were present. There was no excitement attending the examination, as it had been kept perfectly quiet, neither party caring to have the affair made public.

The brothers were first called, and proved by a copy of the city records that they were born in

Paramaribo, and were the lawful kin of Francis Hartze, who died at such a time. They then took oath that they were the sole surviving relatives, and with a self-satisfied expression defied any one to bring forward any proofs to the contrary, the elder brother expressing his belief that Mr. Austin was demented, and suggesting the practicability of having him confined in some lunatic asylum.

"Is this all the evidence you have to put in, and have you nothing farther to say, gentlemen?" inquired the Judge.

"This is all," was the reply.

"Are you ready, Mr. Austin, with any evidence to sustain the case you have preferred against the Messrs. Hartze?"

"I am."

The room was as quiet as the grave, and the Judge waited a moment before taking up the other side of the case. Then he asked:

"Where is your evidence?"

"My first witness," replied Mr. Austin, "will be

Marion Castillo, who is in waiting in the ante-room."

Had the brothers been confronted by a denizen of the other world, their appearance would not have been more strange or startling. They turned deathly pale, and great drops of perspiration stood upon their foreheads. They rallied as soon as possible, but it was evident to the most casual observer that the mentioning of the name of Marion Castillo had produced a most disagreeable effect.

"Let Marion Castillo be called," said the Judge.

The officer retired, and soon returned accompanied by a middle-aged, matronly looking lady, whose features gave evidence that there was Spanish blood in her veins.

The brothers did not meet her glance. They both, as if by common instinct, averted their faces, and it was apparent that the ordeal was a severe one to them.

"Marion Castillo," said the Judge, "take the witness stand and testify whatever you may know in

reference to the right of title which Messrs. Samuel and James Hartze may have to hold plantation "Silver Water."

She took the stand, and in a clear voice spoke as follows:

"Twenty years ago I lived at plantation 'Silver Water' as a companion to its mistress, Mrs. Francis Hartze. These brothers also lived there in the capacity of overseers, Mr. Hartze being his own manager. The family occupied the same house, and were all on terms of equality. Two years passed, and one day Mr. Francis Hartze, while hunting, accidentally shot himself, producing a wound which caused his death two months after. Four months later, Mrs. Hartze gave birth to a daughter, and died in child-birth. The child, however, was a healthy one, and thrived well. One evening, as I was sitting in my room, rocking the child, (for I took the entire care of and loved it as well as if it had been my own), some one tapped on the door, and in response to my 'Come in,' there entered Mr.

Samuel Hartze, who said that he wished to speak with me on an important matter, and asked if I would take my bible oath not to say anything concerning what he was going to announce, even if I did not assent to his proposition. I was surprised, both at the nature of his message and his appearance in my room at such an hour. But having a woman's curiosity, I consented, and taking the oath, he immediately entered upon the subject for which he came.

"'Miss Castillo,' he remarked, 'you are well aware that but for one claimant, my brother and I would come into possession of 'Silver Water.' That claimant you have in your arms—that girl baby. We want her got rid of. We will give you twenty-five thousand guilders if you will put her out of the way for us. You need not answer now; but take your time to consider it.'

"It seems as if the spirit of evil had taken possession of me from that moment. In my waking hours the figures, 25,000 guilders, seemed always

before me, and in my dreams they constantly filled my brain. I was as one possessed, and the two brothers, seeing what effect the dazzling offer had made, took frequent opportunity of repeating it. In two months I was ripe for the consummation of their plans. They wished me to *accidentally* drown the child; but my soul revolted against any such violent means as that. Finally, I proposed leaving the colony, and pledging myself that I would dispose of the heiress in such a safe manner that she never would trouble them.

"Finding that I would not resort to any violent means, they acquiesced, and I departed, taking with me the money. I went to the United States, where I lived for a time, and then wishing to go to Spain, my native country, concluded to leave the child in the care of a couple in the town of R, whom I knew would take the best of care of it, and love and rear it as their own. I deposited the child one Christmas eve, near midnight, inside of their porch, writing a letter, purporting to come from

the child's father, signing my own initials, asking them to take care of her, and hanging a locket containing her mother's picture, about her neck. I left her and stood on the opposite side of the street, and saw the couple take the child in. During the week I called upon them, representing myself as a seamstress in search of employment. I saw the child, and knew it was in good hands, and then I went to Spain. But my conscience troubled me. I knew that through my means she had been defrauded of her birthright. In a few years I came back, and frequently saw the child on the street, and made certain that she was better off with those who had her than she could possibly be with me. One morning there was a rumor reached me that the child had been abducted. There was consternation in the town, but all efforts to find her proved unavailing. What I suffered is beyond language to express. It seemed as if my sin had now been punished. I went everywhere, but could not find her. At length the

Rays received a letter, which announced that the child was alive and in good hands, and this intelligence filled my soul with a joy unspeakable. I thanked God over and over again. Oh, how light my heart felt! But I could not discover her whereabouts. One day I told Mrs. Ray the whole story. They continued to receive letters, and in one of them they were asked to insert a personal in a New York paper, offering a large reward for information concerning the whereabouts of myself. These letters were always delivered by persons who brought them to the house, and received the answers. They would not give the least hint of where they were from, and it proved useless to attempt to find out anything. Their next letter announced that they knew of the person, and then I received a letter, asking me to come to Surinam. I am here, and fully prepared, if need be, to substantiate every particular."

There was a pause, when Samuel Hartze arose and said that he had listened to this very plausible



story, with much interest, and he supposed they had the daughter alluded to, or some one they had trumped up to personate her, near by, in order to carry out the conspiracy planned against himself and brother. He would like to know whom they had to take this part in the farce.

"Very well, you shall know," responded Mr. Austin; "you have seen her often, and she is a person whom both of you esteem highly. It is the young lady whom I have adopted—she is the person who is the rightful owner of plantation 'Silver Water,' and we have every document to prove it. If you wish to contest this, I, as her legal guardian, am ready to meet you in the Courts. In fact, I will force you to do it, unless you surrender at once!"

The Judge, who was willing to allow all the privileges he could, as this was merely a preliminary examination; then remarked, that according to the evidence, this was a very serious case. It could be amicably settled between the parties in-

terested if they were so disposed; otherwise, it must come before the Court.

Nora, as we shall call her for the present, did not covet plantation "Silver Water," as she was very happy in her present position. But her sense of right could not allow others to hold that which was hers, especially as her uncles had made such a criminal attempt to defraud her of her birth-right. She therefore cordially entered into Mr. Austin's plans to contest the case should it go before the Courts.

Notice was given to the proper officials not to record any deed by which the plantation should pass into other hands, and instructions were given, that if any parties wished to look up the title of the property, to inform all such that there was a dispute in reference thereto. These precautions were deemed necessary in order to prevent the brothers from selling the property, which event would make it more difficult for Nora to recover possession, beside causing expensive litigation.

## CHAPTER XIII.

THE HARTZE BROTHERS SHOW THE CLOVEN FOOT  
—MR. ARTHUR ROXBY IS INTRODUCED TO THE  
READER—NORA'S ABDUCTION FOR THE THIRD  
TIME—THE PURSUIT—CAST DOWN BUT NOT FOR-  
SAKEN—GREAT PERIL—HER RIGHTS SECURED  
AND SPIRITUALISM TRIUMPHANT.

**O**NE morning, some four weeks after the examination, a message came from the Hartze Brothers, inviting the Austins and Nora to come up and talk matters over, and, after some discussion of the subject, they concluded it best to accept the invitation on the following day.

With feelings mingled with a certain dread, which she could not account for, Nora entered the boat which was to convey them to the plantation. They had proceeded but a short distance ere she asked Mr. Austin if he was armed.

"No indeed," was his reply, "I am not in the habit of going armed."

"Then I beg of you to return and provide yourself with a revolver, and if there is a man among your boatmen whom you cannot rely upon, in case of an emergency, let him stay at home and take some other in his stead."

"Why, Nora, you seem extremely nervous to-day. What does it mean?" he exclaimed.

"It means this: This visit to 'Silver Water' is to prove an eventful one. I am almost of a mind not to go and to entreat you not to go also. I feel so strangely. It seems as if the time my father spoke of is at hand. Cannot you get our neighbor Roxby to accompany us? His presence may act as a sedative, and his evidence in case there is difficulty, be of importance. It will be well to tell him the particulars. He will not betray your confidence, and may prove of great benefit to us in the days to come."

The girl spoke as one having authority, and

deeply sensible that a shadow was hovering near, and not as the gentle, winsome Nora, whom to know was to love, and whose presence was a continual benediction. Mr. Austin understood it intuitively. She was speaking for those over beyond, who knew whereof they affirmed, and he heeded the warnings, as was his wont.

While he was about it he took a pair of revolvers and a box of cartridges. These he secreted, and looking over his boatmen, felt satisfied each one of them would lay down his life for Nora, if necessary, for they worshipped the very ground she walked upon. They were black skinned; but true hearts beat nobly in their bosoms. Then he pulled to his friend Roxby's plantation across the river. This Mr. Roxby was a fine specimen of the Surinam planter, not yet twenty-five years of age; a self-made man, who by his own exertions had taken charge of the plantation at his father's decease, brought it under good cultivation, and thus kept a home for his mother and sister. Between the Aus-

tins and the Roxbys there was the most tender friendship, and the son had long looked with admiring eyes upon Mr. Austin's adopted daughter, and love for her was fast gaining a mastery over his heart.

He was exceedingly glad to be of service, and would also be pleased to make the trip. His surprise upon learning the story of the perfidy of the brothers was manifest by his words of contempt, and he agreed to take an active part, if need be, in bringing them to justice, if they were not inclined to settle amicably. One little feeling of unhappiness was mingled with his desire to be of service, and that was, if Nora came into possession of that valuable plantation, would she ever be his?

Thoughts are strange things. There is no accounting for them, and the mind which engenders them is incomprehensible in its depth and power. How young Roxby, as he sat near Nora that beautiful morning gliding up the Surinam river, wished that he had spoken the words which had so oft

leaped to his lips and died away without utterance, as he had visited Nora at her home. Now he felt embarrassed. The difference in their positions, if she obtained the property, was not pleasant for him to contemplate; and he feared that she might have an idea, if he spoke the words which for weeks had been in his thoughts, that he was induced to do so by the prospect of obtaining a share of her wealth. He felt his position keenly, but strove to banish all unwelcome impressions and enjoy only the passing hour.

Nora, as she sat by his side, was a picture worthy of careful study. A face of glowing beauty, with eyes beaming with intelligence, a tenderness about the mouth which betokened a kind heart—a woman born to love and to be loved, who interested and attracted all with whom she came in contact, possessing that power of attraction, derived from spiritualistic mediumship, which cannot well be described; but which all have felt, among a certain few who are ranked as earth's choicest

gems—jewels in the crown of humanity, set in the seal of the Divine coronet.

Arthur Roxby had long entertained the most tender feelings toward Nora. These had ripened into a manly love; he thought of her constantly, and was often in her company, and hoped one day to make her his wife. He was one of those men with whom the currents of life ran deep, who regarded love as sacred, that once entering the heart was a guest to be cherished with a devotion which nothing but death could part. His intercourse with Nora, at first, had been more like that of a brother, than a lover, until recently he had found that she was the one person in all the world necessary to his happiness. This thought illumined his life and was the bright star shining upon his pathway.

This day, as he gazed into her face, he felt a thrill throughout his being, which told him that the beautiful girl held possession of his heart, and he resolved, if opportunity offered, to confess his



love and obtain a promise that she would be his. The hours passed delightfully as on they rowed, skimming o'er the waters, drinking in the pure atmosphere, fresh from the forests, laden with fragrance and with healing on its wings. All nature was in harmony, giving a foretaste of that happiness which we so fondly anticipate lies in the heavenly country beyond.

At noontime they stopped at the plantation of a mutual acquaintance, where they took dinner, and were hospitably entertained after the regular Surinam fashion. After the repast they all took a walk about the grounds, and Nora and Arthur found themselves alone in the orange grove. The remainder of the party were in the sugar house examining some new machinery. Arthur felt that the propitious time had arrived, and he told her of his love, how he had pictured a home with her as his wife, and it would be the grand object of his life to make her happy. "I am aware," he continued, "that the revelations which I have heard to-

day, will make a great difference in our positions; but for this I care nothing; were you without a guilder or a friend in the world, I would love you the same. Nora, tell me if my love is returned."

"Arthur," she replied, "we have long been friends, and I have held you in high esteem. Let us continue our friendship, and from the feelings of my heart toward you, I feel certain that love is not far away. Consider yourself as my dearest friend. The next month may afford an opportunity of testing your *love*. When that time comes, then my answer will be given. I know you will be true to me, and our future will blend together. You have made me very, very happy by your preference, and the words you have spoken this day. This is the happiest moment of my existence, and come what will, I have the great pleasure of knowing that I am beloved by one who has long been well and favorably known as possessing the characteristics of a true man."

At this moment Mr. Austin's voice was heard

calling for them to go on board the boat, and once more the party were proceeding up river.

They arrived at "Silver Water" about an hour before sunset, and received a most gratifying reception. A sumptuous repast was soon served, and happiness ruled the hours. Toward Nora the brothers exhibited the most particular attentions, and it was arranged that the party should remain a week or more, and participate in the many enjoyments which a generous hospitality would afford. At evening Nora had the supreme pleasure of sitting at the piano which had been often played upon by her mother, and of performing some of the very music with which she, in her lifetime, had beguiled the hours. The piano was a fine instrument and had been tuned and taken care of with the most scrupulous nicety. It required but little effort to one of her peculiar magnetic and clairvoyant temperament, to feel her mother's influence and to be deeply impressed with her presence on such an occasion. Nora's heart was full of love

and joy, as she thought of the events of the day. Soon Mr. Austin approached and whispered that the brothers had informed him that they had concluded, under all the circumstances, to resign the plantation if legal steps were stayed and they allowed suitable time to arrange their affairs. "It may be," said he, "that there is some treachery in this offer. They may have some plot; but let us, at least for the present, give them the benefit of the doubt, and accept the offer in the same spirit in which they have made it."

Nora had some misgivings; but the constant courtesy and kindness of her uncles appealed so plainly to let the past be forgotten, that suspicion was disarmed and she gave herself up to the pleasures of the hour, unwilling to have them marred by the intrusion of unpleasant thoughts. In this way the days passed happily on—no thought of treachery and no fears of harm.

The last day of their tarry was to be devoted by the gentlemen to a grand hunting excursion. Sev-

eral of the neighboring planters were to take part, and it promised to be a day of unalloyed pleasure. Arthur and Mr. Austin entered heartily into the spirit of the occasion, as both were fond of such sports, and the party started out at dawn filled with pleasurable anticipations.

At noontime they were fifteen miles from plantation, enjoying fine sport; and after partaking of a lunch, a negro boy made his appearance (it was afterwards ascertained that he had been there over night, and the plan was a contrived one), stating that some accident had happened to the machinery which required the immediate presence of Massa Samuel Hartze.

With much apparent regret he left the company, urging them not to hurry back on his account, as his huntsmen and brother would remain behind, and the sport was too good to leave. He would endeavor to come as far as the head of the canal, some ten miles from the plantation, and meet them on their return in the evening.

The party continued their hunting, meeting with fine success, and occasionally getting separated. At five o'clock they met together, each one showing the game he had secured. As it was to be a moonlight evening, there was no need to hasten back, and it was agreed to proceed leisurely.

How strange it was that the other brother was not visible. No one remembered to have seen him since one o'clock, and he was expected every moment. Finally, it was concluded that he had lost the party and was perhaps waiting for them on the homeward path. Mr. Austin now felt some uneasiness and was glad enough when all fell into line for plantation. He had painful forebodings, which were strengthened by the return home of one brother and the mysterious disappearance of the other.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now let us follow the brothers and glean an inkling of their designs.

The elder pushed home as fast as he could, and

by a short cut, which he gave his huntsmen strict orders to avoid in going and returning, he reduced the distance considerably, and by two o'clock struck the centre of the canal, only a few miles from the house. Here a boat and four stalwart rowers were waiting, in obedience to orders. He now waited as patiently as he could under the circumstances, and in less than half an hour his brother joined him. Such a diabolical look as their faces wore and such a change in their demeanor!

"Row, boys! now, for your lives! One hundred guilders if you will reach the head of the canal in twenty minutes!"

The negroes pulled, and the boat swiftly cut her way through the water. They gained their reward, for there were a few minutes to spare when they touched the shore.

Up to the house the brothers quickly wended their way, and calling the overseer, Samuel, asked him if he had obeyed orders, in having the eight-oared boat in readiness.

"Yes, sir, all is ready."

"Where is our neice, Nora?"

"In the boat-house, reading."

"Where is Mrs. Austin?"

"Visiting some of the sick negroes."

"Everything is as we would have it, brother. I secreted the gold on board the boat ere we started, this morning," whispered Samuel. "Now then, let us get the girl on board and make all possible haste."

Walking down to the shore, they saw Nora in the boat-house reading and anon enjoying the scene upon the river. Joining her, they accounted for their presence by stating, with the utmost frankness, that they had come home early, leaving the rest of the party in the woods, having been sent for to attend to some important business on the plantation above. The afternoon was a most lovely one and they easily persuaded her to accompany them, saying that it would prove a very pleasant row, and they would return long ere the hunt-



ers, as it was probable they would not be home until late in the evening.

Nora felt a slight uneasiness, which was but momentary, and seemingly without thought, accepted the kind invitation and went on board the boat. They had been so courteous during her visit, had become so much interested in her, and talked so fairly about giving up the plantation, that her suspicions were not fully awakened. They pushed off from the shore, and agreeable to orders the steersman soon had the boat in the middle of the river, and the oarsmen bending all their energies, propelled the boat with incredible swiftness. The plantation at which they said they should stop was only ten miles distant, and was reached in an hour. They did not land or even attempt a landing, but continued on without diminishing the speed.

This circumstance aroused Nora's suspicions, and she then had powerful impressions that all was not right, yet she did not feel very uneasy. She called the attention of her Uncle Samuel to the

fact that they had passed by the plantation, and asked him if he was not going to stop.

"I am well aware that we have passed the plantation," he said in a bitter, sneering tone, "and may as well tell you now, as any time, that we did not intend stopping there. We have you now in our power, girl! The tables are turned. We are bound for the Bush Negro country, three days' rowing up the river. Girl, you will never come into possession of 'Silver Water!' It will never be your privilege to enjoy that property. We have converted everything possible into gold, and it is secreted in this boat. After remaining in the Bush Negro country until the affair of your abduction gets quieted down, we shall go around by a creek to the seashore, and take passage in some ship for Europe, where we intend placing you in a Convent or an insane asylum. You little thought of this, girl, when you gave that meddlesome Austin liberty to contend for the plantation; but we coolly made up our minds, if you drove us to relinquish

'Silver Water,' you should go with us and leave Surinam forever! You have seen the last of that property. Our plans are so well laid, that we defy any one to discover our whereabouts!"

These taunting remarks roused Nora to a sense of her position. She did not fear personal violence, and her mind being divested of that fear, she answered, with a boldness which surprised her abductors.

"You have the advantage now," she said; "but how long do you suppose you can keep me? I have friends who will travel the world over to aid me in getting my rights. And beside this; I have a band of invisible friends who will lend their powerful aid in my behalf. I will, if possible, ere we part, give you some proofs of the powers of mediumship which have been conferred upon me. Such demonstrations may do you good."

"I am glad to see you in such good spirits, niece," sarcastically replied her Uncle Samuel; "it will be best for you to endeavor to keep so, as

you will need all your courage ere you part from us. You have done us a fearful injury, have ruined our reputations, and driven us from 'Silver Water,' and now we mean to have our revenge. Learn to give up the world and its enjoyments—yours will be a monotonous existence, and that pretty face and your winning ways will not excite any more admiration in gay society. Your days of queening it are over. You chose to fight against us, and we have proved the victors."

Nora made no reply. Her heart was too heavy to admit of speech. The boat still kept on her course. The sun went down and the moon slowly rose. All nature was calm and beautiful, just such a night as awakens thoughts of the departed who kept pace with us in the race of life for a time, and then dropped by the wayside, and their souls entered into the beyond. Just such an hour when spirit friends hover near and with their dear presence impart benedictions.

Nora and her two uncles sat quietly in the lit-

the cabin of the boat, when, suddenly she became entranced. To her great joy, she was perfectly conscious, but still very strongly impressed. She spoke in a man's voice, addressing her companions as follows:

"I am the spirit of your brother Francis speaking through my dear daughter Nora. I warn you not to carry out your evil intentions. If you persist, we will interpose and you will bitterly rue it. There is time now to give up your plans and leave her at the next plantation, where she can soon return to her friends, and you can follow your own inclinations to leave the country, and will not be molested. Remember, if you follow my advice, all will be well; if not, you will deeply regret this day, for the inhabitants of the spirit world are striving for the right, and they will succeed."

The brothers were startled. The voice and the gestures were true to life. That was unmistakable, and so natural was it all, that they at first thought their dead brother was actually there in

the flesh. But soon they recovered from their fright, aided by a copious draught of stimulants, and treated the affair as a neat little trick of Nora's.

"Will you heed the warnings?" said Nora. "I never yet knew them to fail. Here and now I entreat of you to put me ashore at yonder plantation, or you will bring down upon your heads the consequences of your treachery!"

The brothers laughed and mocked at her earnestness.

Then Nora held her peace, and stepping outside, enjoyed the beauties of the night. Her mind was strangely calm; and she feared no evil, for she could feel the presence of the invisibles, and with them on our side, whom shall we fear?

\* \* \* \* \*

We will now return to the hunting party. Mr. Austin and Arthur Roxby did not like the returning home of Mr. Samuel Hartze; it looked like a preconcerted arrangement to them. And when they missed his brother, they began to feel greatly

alarmed. They could not, however, under the circumstances, leave their companions abruptly. Impressions strong and fast came pouring in upon Mr. Austin, until he could scarcely restrain himself from abandoning the party. The beauties of the evening were lost upon him and his friend Roxby, so impatient were they to reach plantation and assure themselves of the safety of Nora.

With minds filled with dread and apprehension, they drew near the house. Mrs. Austin was enjoying herself on the piazza, and congratulated them upon their success in hunting.

Her husband spoke in a low tone, inquiring at what hour their hosts returned.

"I have not seen them," was her reply.

"Not seen them; why, wife, you are surely jesting with me!"

"Never more in earnest in my life, my dear husband."

"They left us five hours ago!"

"I have been visiting in the sick quarters and only returned a few moments since."

"Where is Nora?"

"When I left she was in the boat-house, reading and enjoying the beauties of the charming afternoon."

Ringing the bell, a servant appeared. "Where are your masters?" inquired Mr. Austin.

"Gone up river," was the reply.

"How do you know?"

"Me saw 'em get in the eight-oared boat, and Missis Nora was with 'em," replied the servant.

With a face as pale as the dead, and with his mind filled with dread apprehensions, he next inquired what time they left.

"About three o'clock, Massa."

"Which way did they go?"

"Up riber, Massa."

Looking toward the corner of the room where the safe stood, he noticed that the door was open. He also observed that one of the drawers had



been taken out. He was certain that it contained a large amount of gold, as the brothers had received, only a few days ago, the price of their last crop. Now it was gone. They had decamped, taking Nora with them. This was certain, and to make assurance doubly sure, he found, lying on the top of the safe, an envelope directed to him. He opened it and read as follows:

"JAMES AUSTIN: We are even with you now. Our plans are all laid. In company with your lovely adopted daughter Nora, who is our niece, we are to leave Surinam forever! We have a vessel in waiting outside of Braam's Point, and to-night, ere you read this, we shall be miles away on the broad ocean. Don't attempt to follow, for it will be useless. 'Silver Water' may go to ruin, and you with it, for what we care. We have money invested abroad and money with us. May the reading of this do your meddlesome heart good. Nora will never enjoy plantation 'Silver Water,' as we have a far different life marked out for her.

SAMUEL HARTZE AND BROTHER."

This, then, was the plot. But the servant said the boat went *up* stream. He called him again, and the man asserted that he was right, and another servant also had watched the boat, and was ready to take Bible oath that he saw it disappear around the bend, two miles away, going as fast as eight of their best rowers could pull it.

Then the letter was written as a blind. They wanted to gain time, thought Mr. Austin. But there was no time for inaction. Pursuit must be made at once!

Calling the party together, he briefly told them the story of the perfidy of the Hartze brothers, and read their letter. Astonishment was depicted upon every countenance, and each man volunteered to start at once in pursuit, and if need be, sacrifice his life in the attempt to restore Nora, and defeat the villainous plot of her unnatural relatives.

As quickly as possible they got in readiness. Each of the party was well armed; and at eight o'clock, six resolute men, under direction of Mr.

Austin and Arthur Roxby, entered the boat, the word was given, and on she sped up the river until near midnight. Then they rested. Two boats from farther up passed them. They had seen a boat, three hours ago, which corresponded with that belonging to "Silver Water," and there was a young lady on board.

All night long the negroes rowed. But at daylight they became exhausted, and it was absolutely necessary for them to sleep.

The pursuit continued through the day, and just at nightfall, they saw a boat in the dim distance far ahead. They soon made her out as the one they were after; and stimulating the rowers with the bestowal of a goodly amount of coin, they again renewed their task with a determination worthy of the cause. The boat ahead also began to increase her speed.

Darkness came down, and it would be upwards of an hour ere the moon would rise.

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The hours seemed long to Nora. She had vivid impressions that her friends would follow in pursuit, but when her uncle told her that he had misdirected them by leaving a letter which would lead them *down* river, her heart sank within her. The moments crept slowly by. It was getting monotonous, as they did not land, and she was very tired of her close quarters and cramped position.

She was the first to see the boat behind them, and kept her own counsel. Very soon her uncles saw it, and they were fearfully excited and swore they would never be taken alive. Nora kept as tranquil as possible, for she did not care to irritate them, as both had been drinking freely, and she feared the consequences, lone woman as she was, with two desperate men.

As soon as the darkness came on, they rowed up into a creek, the entrance to which was concealed by a dense growth of underbrush; and when the moon arose they were safely sheltered from all observation.

Two of the boatmen were detailed to secrete themselves near the opening, and report when the pursuing boat went by. This they soon did, saying that she was going very slowly; the brothers then came and watched her out of sight.

Mr. Austin was perplexed, and so were his companions, for the boat they were in pursuit of could not be seen when the moon came up. They pulled several miles up stream, and then, obeying strong impressions, he ordered them to return, and at the suggestion of one of the planters on board, who was well acquainted with that section of the river, entered the creek.

The boatmen who were on the watch immediately gave the alarm, and the boat started ere she had been observed. Mr. Austin made up his mind to row several hours up the creek, as it formed a passage way to the sea, and he felt positive that the brothers had taken this course. He kept on until after midnight, but saw nothing of the boat. Bitter indeed was his disappointment, and his mind

was haunted with dark forebodings which augured no good for his beloved Nora; yet a hope lingered in his breast that he should yet overtake them and save his darling from any harm.

Arthur Roxby was fearfully excited. He felt that Nora was in the hands of villains, relatives though they were. How he longed to catch a glimpse of her dear form, and once more have her under his protection. He suffered much in mind on that passage, and although outwardly calm, a terrible fire of suspense tortured him.

"What shall you do, friend Austin," he inquired, "if you do not find them within the next twenty-four hours?"

"I hardly know, but something whispers to me that we shall not go out of this creek without Nora with us. I feel deeply impressed with this, but cannot tell when or where we shall find her. Sure it is we have not met a boat or the sign of one since we came in from the river. I propose to stay in the creek all day to-morrow, and have some of

the boatmen watch the river to give notice of any boat passing up or down. They all know the 'Silver Water' boat, as it is of peculiar model, and there is not another like her on the river."

They drifted down the creek with the tide, and were glad to greet the morning sun. Preparing their breakfast they moored the boat under some trees, and held council together.

Nothing could be decided upon, and they again drifted down the creek the entire day. It was the longest day of their lives, filled with dread suspense, and the night which followed was one of dismal forebodings.

About twenty miles from the mouth of the creek there was another running to the northward. Here they found themselves on the morning of the third day. The water was very shallow here, and the channel extremely tortuous, the branches of the trees meeting in several places, making navigation difficult. One of the planters thought it possible that the fugitives might have taken refuge up that

creek, as nothing had been seen of them elsewhere, and there was a worn-out plantation some eight miles up, but it had a disreputable name, and the idea was at once abandoned.

While drifting by the mouth of this creek, undecided and nearly exhausted with fatigue and excitement, the boat was softly hailed. Mr. Austin immediately ordered the steersman to head for the shore, which was soon reached. Imagine his surprise, to see Sancho, one of the 'Silver Water' slaves, who immediately came on board and handed Mr. Austin a letter, written in pencil on the fly leaf of a book. It read as follows:

"MY DEAR FATHER:—The bearer, Sancho, at the risk of his life, consents to get this missive to you. Take him on board of your boat and protect him. I am a prisoner, confined in the upper chamber of a miserable house up the creek. Sancho will guide you to me. Come to-night! My uncles are planning to take me through the forests, a distance of a hundred miles, to the seashore; from thence they



will go to Europe and place me in a convent or insane asylum. Don't fail me in this my hour of peril! The invisibles say you will get this in season. Last night was spent in carousal by my uncles and their miserable companions, and I think to-night will be spent in a similar manner. How I long to see your face. I can hardly wait. I have suffered much in mind, for what protection have I among men who get intoxicated? Thank God, I have a loaded revolver, and if worst comes to worst, I will use it! *My honor is my all. I will preserve it or die in the attempt!*

Affectionately yours,

NORA RAY AUSTIN."

The reading of the last lines caused the face of Mr. Austin to turn to a deathly pallor. Arthur Roxby noticed it, and asked what was the matter.

"Read the letter aloud, and then in God's name let us devise some means to rescue my darling, this night! I shall go mad if we do not accomplish something ere the dawn of another day!"

Arthur read it aloud. Every man of the six

planters rose to their feet as if actuated by a common impulse; they joined hands and swore they would not return to their homes and wives until Nora Austin was safe under their protection!

They then questioned Sancho, and asked him if he could pilot the boat up the creek.

"Yes, massas, I been dere before."

Oh how long those afternoon hours were,—how the time dragged. The boat was placed in a little indentation of the creek and covered with branches, so that it would be impossible to see her in passing.

Slowly sank the sun to rest, and darkness came down over the scene. How impatient they were to start. But caution must be observed, and after considerable parleying it was decided that it would not be safe to start until eight o'clock. The moon did not rise until eleven, and this would give them plenty of time for action. All were well armed, and felt relieved when the boat entered the creek. With muffled oars, and with Sancho as steersman,

she wound her way amid the tortuous passages, and in several places they were obliged to cut away the parasites which clung to the overhanging branches of the trees, in order to effect a passage for their boat.

They arrived within a quarter of a mile of the house at ten o'clock, and moored the boat so that it could not be seen. They could distinctly hear the sounds of carousal which was going on, and noticed a dim light burning in the chamber which they supposed to be occupied by Nora.

Arthur Roxby begged to be detailed to her rescue, and it was finally decided that there must be two, consisting of Mr. Austin and himself. The others, including the boatmen, were to remain in the boat, with their arms in readiness, and await further developments. The firing of a pistol would be the alarm signal, upon which all were to make quick time for the house, and then, if need be, every man sell his life as dearly as possible.

The two crept softly up under the chamber win-

dow. The name of Nora was spoken as loudly as Mr. Austin dared. Three times he repeated it, and no response. He then said to Arthur, "As I am much lighter than you, perhaps you can let me stand upon your shoulders, as I intend entering that chamber, cost what it may." Quick as thought Arthur lifted him up. He opened the blind and crawled in as cautiously as a cat. He examined every part of the room, and then entered the one adjoining. *But Nora was not there!* His grief and disappointment were so great that he could hardly restrain himself from crying out; but he controlled himself and kept quiet, and dropping out of the window, communicated to Arthur in low tones his ill success.

They then looked into the window of the room where the carousal was going on. There were three men besides the Hartze brothers,—brutal looking villains they were, and all of them greatly excited by liquor. They were engaged in gambling, and money was changing hands with quick dispatch.

Nora was not there. A hurried counsel, and they concluded to return to the boat and decide upon their further course of action.

Their companions were waiting in the utmost suspense, and were greatly surprised at the result. Sancho was called, and gave his opinion that Nora must be a prisoner in the watch-house.

It was then decided that Austin, Roxby and Sancho should renew the search, and the remainder of the party, under leadership of a planter named Judake; surround the house, and capture the inmates, dead or alive, for the absence of Nora filled the hearts of these men—most of whom were fathers—with much disquietude.

The surprise of the Hartze brothers when called upon to give themselves up was terrible to witness. The breaking in upon their play by a band of men, with revolvers cocked and ready for use, all of whom were their immediate friends and acquaintances, and the guilt which their deeds forced into their minds, had an effect of almost sobering them.

With blanched faces they looked at Judake, and had they dared would have shot him on the spot. Their host, a brute of a fellow, himself an outlaw, made a show of fight, but was silenced at once by a blow from Judake. One other, his overseer, named Brown, as licentious a fellow as ever breathed, of whom more will be said hereafter, made an attempt to jump from the window, but was caught and securely bound.

"I have but a few words to say," exclaimed Judake. "We are determined to carry you to Paramaribo, and there give you over to the officials. If you go peaceably, well and good. If you make trouble it will be the worse for you, as we are bound to take you there, either dead or alive, and if Nora Austin is not found we will take the law into our own hands, and hang every man of you at sunrise! Seize them, men!" It was quick work, and ere the villains had time to make resistance, they were all securely bound and guarded until the time of Mr. Austin's return.

The three who went in search of Nora arrived at the watch-house and found the door ajar. Entering, they lighted a small lantern which Sancho carried, and were surprised upon finding Nora's hat. A more thorough search revealed a note in which she said:

"I knew you would come, as my invisible friends have kept me advised of your movements; but I feared that you would not be in time to save me from the brutality of that overseer Brown, who threatened, with horrid oaths, that he would accomplish his purpose ere the night was passed. I have my revolver, and could have shot him for his cowardly threats; but I did not wish to take human life. I have succeeded in breaking the lock, and shall go to Aunt Chloe's, a free negro woman, who lives two miles from here in the woods. There you will find me. Come quickly. If Brown reads this letter and follows me there, I will shoot him dead! God and the invisibles, who are my comforters and protectors, will give me the strength and the will to do it! I will never submit to outrage!

NORA."

"Where is this Aunt Chloe's?" asked Mr. Austin, with great eagerness.

"I'll lead you there, just follow me," answered Sancho.

They quickly followed the faithful Sancho, and the moon just rising gave them the benefit of its peaceful rays. While their hearts beat with indignation toward the perfidious uncles, yet they felt a deep cause for thankfulness that she had escaped their nefarious designs and was safe. How vigorously they followed the path, and how they longed to see her, and thus afford her the comfort and aid of their presence.

The house was reached. Sitting outside the door in the clear moonlight, was old Aunt Chloe. When the three advanced, she shrieked out, "Ye devils, if ye come any nearer I'll shoot ye!"

"Not so fast, aunty," said Sancho, "we are friends, Massa Austin, Roxby and me,—Sancho."

"De Lord be praised! de Lord be praised! bress His holy name! She said you was comin', and was



so sure of it dat she's gone in and lied down. Oh, she was drefful tired,—all beat out, poor ting—shut up in dat watch-house, poor ting—she runned all de way here. Den she sit down by me and tole me all. Fore she got fairly thro', she went off in a kind of a trance like, and somebody who said dar name was Aunt Susie, spoke in dis way:

“Oh, Aunty Chloe, she's safe at last. We've brung her thro' all her trubbles. Let de poor ting rest. Massa Austin, and Roxby and Sancho, are in de watch-house. Dey hab found de note and am comin' on de way. Tell her to git some sleep, right away, quick, or she will hab de brain feber. We will be roun' about her an' make her all well wile she sleep. Don't wake her till de mornin'.' After she said dat, she waked up and said:

“Aunt, what have I been talking about?” I tole her ebery word, and wid a sweet smile on her face she made sich a beau'ful prayer, an' den lied down like a little infant baby. Oh, she am an angel, an' de good Lord an' His spirits am her frien's!”

They went into the room, which was marvelously clean and neat, for good old Aunt Chloe was a model housekeeper. On the lounge lay Nora, sweetly sleeping. What a picture of beauty and innocence, although her features gave evidence of suffering; yet a smile sweet and ineffable played over them. Mr. Austin knelt and thanked God for His goodness in preserving her in the trials which had beset her, while Arthur Roxby, with the great love he bore her filling his heart, wept like a child.

It was decided not to awaken her, but to let her sleep until morn. Aunt Chloe, with a hospitality which shew her kind heart, prepared a bountiful luncheon, for the men were very hungry, and then Sancho was sent back to the house to report and bring back the news as to the result of the attack.

He returned in a couple of hours, with the intelligence that the prisoners were all secured, and they awaited the return of Messrs. Austin and Roxby for further orders.

Early in the morning Nora awoke. Her first words to Aunt Chloe were,

"What time did they come, aunty, and why did you not awaken me?"

"Oh, dey come all right, Missis Nora; but de spirits, as you call 'em, tole me to let you sleep, an' I minded dem. It's jess as it should be, an' after ye have made yer toilet, ye'll be glad enough to see dem, won't you, honey?"

It was the work of but a few moments for Nora to put herself in a presentable condition, and slipping into the sitting-room, she was caught in the arms of Mr. Austin, who pressed her to his bosom, and kissed her with a joy unspeakable. His darling Nora, the child who had been such a treasure, the darling of his household, was safe, unscathed! All the anxiety, the dread, the terrible excitement of the past four days were dispelled, and he thanked God, as the tears flowed—tears of joy they were—down his cheeks. It was the happiest moment of his life, and he felt that the invisibles had kept

their promises, and proved themselves faithful and truthful to the very letter.

Then Arthur Roxby entered, and Nora's joy upon seeing him, could not be controlled. She seized his proffered hand, and with her face aglow with love, sweetly said:

"Arthur, you know I told you not long since, that the time would come to test your love. That time has come. You have been tried and not found wanting. My answer to your proposal is: I will be yours; long have you had my heart, and may it be my constant endeavor to make you a loving, helpful wife."

"What does this mean?" inquired Mr. Austin, smiling.

"Only this, dear father, and nothing more: Arthur, a fortnight since, asked me to be his wife. I had long respected him. Since then I have loved him. I told him I would give him his answer, and now I have done so."

"Well, this is a romantic surprise; but nothing

could have given me more pleasure, Arthur, as you are a man after my own heart. Take her and may God bless you forever. I am the happiest man in the colony. This surprise has filled me with delight. Now let us partake of the breakfast Aunt Chloe has served, and then we have some unpleasant duties to perform, after which I trust that the sunshine of life will follow with its inspiring beams."


After they had eaten breakfast, Nora obtained a promise from Aunt Chloe that she would come and live with her at "Silver Water," after she had obtained possession of the property.

Upon arriving at the planter's house they were met by Mr. Judake, who related briefly what he had done. The prisoners were conveyed to town, where they were given over to the authorities. At the next sitting of the court Nora Hartze alias Ray, was proved to be the sole owner of plantation "Silver Water." She interceded with the Judge to make the punishment of her uncles as light as possible, as she bore no malice, and

was blessed with a forgiving spirit. It was finally decided that they should relinquish to Nora the gold placed on board the boat, which had been missing since the day of their arrest, and give her a draft for two-thirds of the amount which they had invested abroad, and immediately leave the colony, never again, under penalty of twenty years' imprisonment, to step on its soil. The brothers were very glad to escape thus easily, and complying with the decree, they left Surinam forever! But the villain Brown, who had been so insulting, and would have done Nora such an irreparable injury, was sentenced to labor in the chain gang for five years.

## CHAPTER XIV.

NORA AT HER OWN PLANTATION—HER MARRIAGE  
—SPIRITUAL SEANCES—NORA OBEYS THE CALL,  
“COME UP HIGHER.”

UR story is nearly ended. Nora, under the guidance of Mr. Austin, took possession of plantation “Silver Water,” hallowed to her as the residence of her parents, and beautiful with all which serves to make life enjoyable. It was a splendid piece of property, the finest in the colony, and its income gave her opportunities for doing good, which were well improved. The negroes found in her a noble, warm-hearted woman, whom they loved for her pleasant words and loving smiles, and each vied with the other in fulfilling their duties acceptably. Love was the guiding star which ruled at “Silver Water,” and the cling-

ing, impressible, affectionate natures of the negroes were fully developed under its benign influences. She established an evening school, which was in session three evenings of each week, under competent teachers, and the result was most beneficial, and highly appreciated.

After she had been in possession of the plantation a year, she was married to the man of her choice, Mr. Arthur Roxby. During the intervening year he had fully informed himself concerning her mediumistic powers and experiences, and was at once in sympathy with them, as he felt assured that they were not of this world, but a Divine gift, which it was her duty to use for the good of humanity. Like his friend Austin, he soon became an ardent spiritualist, and was happy in obeying its glorious teachings.

The marriage took place at plantation "Silver Water." The occasion was one fraught with many pleasures, and long remembered by the elite of Paramaribo, who took part in the festivities.



The Rays were present and rejoiced with the happy couple in the good fortune which was theirs. Marion Castillo was installed as housekeeper, and worshipped her young mistress with a devotion pleasing to witness. Nora remembered her promise to Aunt Chloe, and she was soon established at "Silver Water" in a neat cottage of her own, where her declining years were made happy and every want provided for.

The spiritual seances at "Silver Water" were seasons of great enjoyment and benefit to the favored few who participated and could appreciate the messages of love and comfort which came from loved ones who had solved the mystery of death, and could use Nora's mediumistic powers in crossing the borders and reveal the great truths of immortality, as well as to impart useful knowledge which would be of inestimable service to the recipients. Most remarkable and convincing were these proofs, and highly prized. Nora had a large chamber fitted up expressly as her seance room,

proofs that the messages were truthful. From the journal thus kept, we make the following poetical selection. It purported to have been written by the spirit of an English poetess, whose poems are so full of beauty that they will live as long as time shall exist. The initials, "A. A. P.," were appended, and the poem is in form of a dialogue, as follows:

### MORTAL TO SPIRIT.

#### I.

What of the Saints gone home to glory?  
Do they sometimes hover near?  
Tell me of the wondrous story,  
My doubting heart to cheer.

#### II.

Do they know our joys and sorrows?  
All our lives can they discern?  
Whisper they of glad to-morrows?  
On Love's altar incense burn?

#### III.

Shall I, when life's work is ended,  
Meet the dear ones gone before?  
Earth and spirit, angel-blended,  
Join in Heaven forevermore?

SPIRIT TO MORTAL.

I.

From the land of the immortal,  
Float I now across life's portal,  
Glowing with a love supernal,  
Bearing from the land eternal  
Tidings thy faint heart to cheer.

II.

The saints of earth gone home to glory!  
Would you know their wondrous story?  
Live your life as God commands—  
Earth and Heaven have each demands,  
And the harvest time is near.

III.

Do we know your joys and sorrows?  
Whisper we of glad to-morrows?  
Every thought and every feeling,  
Every upward hope appealing,  
We discern with insight clear.

IV.

Love fills the heart with light divine;  
Hope inspires with joys sublime;  
Faith points beyond and lightens sorrow,  
Preparing for the glad to-morrow,  
Disarming every fear.

V.

To-morrow! it shall have no ending,

Earth and Heaven and spirit blending ;  
Loved ones calling, music ringing,  
Angel voices sweetly singing,  
Softly falling on the ear.

## VI.

Shall ye, when life's tasks are o'er,  
Meet the loved ones gone before?  
Yes! in triumph o'er the grave,  
With Christ, the leader, strong to save,  
Ye shall greet each loved one dear.

## VII.

All the loved, from earth departed,  
All the sad and broken-hearted,  
'Mid the joys of the forever  
Shall reunite, no more to sever  
The bonds that bound them here.

## VIII.

Mortals, shining with God's glory,  
Shall repeat the rapt'rous story,  
How they died to enter in—  
Undefiled and freed from sin—  
Heaven's ecstatic sphere.

## IX.

Spirit forms flit to and fro,  
Cheering hearts bowed down by woe,  
Freighting blessings from above,  
Typifying God's great love  
And bringing Heaven near.

\* \* \* \* \*

A sad night was that when Nora, the young wife, idolized by her husband and by a large circle of friends, bade the earthly life adieu, and "went up higher" among the angels. She died of fever contracted while ministering to a favorite slave woman, who was very ill, and in her great extremity continued to call for the missis, until Nora's sympathetic heart could no longer resist the plaintive appeals; and regardless of self, or the advice of her husband, she went to the bedside of the girl, calmed her fears, and ministered to her needs. Two nights after Nora felt the symptoms of the fever in her veins. The hot blood danced madly, her temples throbbed, and delirium followed. Days and nights ensued of such anxiety as is known only to those who have experienced them. The tide of life ebbed and flowed, at one time giving hope, and then again despair. For eight days did her strong constitution fight with the fever-fiend, until the strength and vitality of

her life was well nigh exhausted. Then reason returned, and she lay with a heavenly smile on her face. She wanted to live, she said, for the good she could accomplish; but God and the angels knew best. She could see angelic forms about her bed, they were beckoning her to follow. Her father and mother, oh they were so near! She saw the angel world with its myriads of bright spirits, and they all pointed upward. "There is no death," she continued, "I am only going home; and you," to her husband and others who stood weeping, "need not mourn for me. I am so happy, thank God, I have not lived in vain, and I can realize all this." A calm followed and she slept. It was hoped by the good physician present, a man of eminent skill in his profession, that she might recover. At midnight she awoke. "Kiss me, my dear husband," she whispered. He reverently kissed her lips—lips which had so often been freighted with words of love. "Father and Mother Austin, let me see you once again; thanks for all your

kindness; how bright, how beautiful; do you not hear them singing? Joy unutterable; they are coming for me, good bye, we will meet again. I will come back with loving messages. *Yes, I am coming!*"

These were the last words of Nora Ray, the Child-Medium, whose life's history we have attempted to portray. So silently, so calmly did her pure soul pass out into the infinite, that those standing by the bedside did not know that all was over, until the physician placed his hand above her heart, and said, "her heart is still, her life work is ended, God has called her, and we have nothing but the casket—the jewel has returned to the Father who gave it."

Never was mortal more sincerely mourned; but the great truths of spiritualism, like a healing balm, came down over mourning hearts and gave them peace—that peace which is not of this world, that peace which passeth understanding. They looked upon her not as lying in her grave, but as an angel

in the bright mansion of her Father's house, and when, after a short time had passed, she communicated through a medium whom her husband invited to plantation, to give some seances, and in the old familiar manner, talked of the better land, assuring them that she was constantly with them, and loved them even more intensely than ever, how comforting were her words. They knew that she lived and was waiting for them in the land immortal, where death and sorrow never enter, and hopefully they wait until they too shall follow and rejoin her, never more to part. May we all have this peace, and understand the great mission of *true* Spiritualism, devoid of superstition and chicanery, tested and accepted by the standards of Christ's teachings, reason, truth and common sense; may its beautiful precepts be accepted as the rule and guide of our lives.

THE END.



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